NEW MASSES

February 26, 1946 15¢ In Canada 20¢

DO WE FACE A CRIME WAVE?

by RICHARD GRAY

MARXISM and the WRITER

Two articles by Howard Fast and Joseph North

Railroading Labor

by WELLINGTON ROE and HARRY I. BECKER

UNO: First Round

by JOHN STUART

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: *You Were Very Young, a short story by Edward Amejko; Isidor Schneider reviews Ralph Fox's "The Novel and the People"; Book reviews by Jack Conroy, Fred Witwer, S. Finkelstein.*

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

THE city market at First Avenue and Tenth Street has always been one of our favorite places. It's colorful in the genuine sense of the word—you can buy everything from whatever meat there is to be had, to a spool of crimson thread or a gay scarf. Vegetables always look fresher than elsewhere—yellow carrots, green snap beans, red radishes are sprayed constantly with cool water; long rows of attractively arranged canned goods, odd kinds of relish and chow-chow, olives and anchovies combine to startle an appetite into liveliness.

Time was when we used to shop there every Saturday. Time was too, when we used to go home loaded down with a couple of shopping bags, and a week's food, for something like five or six dollars. Time was. And a Saturday or so ago we drifted around there again. Outwardly the market was the same—the same kind of crowds milled through; women stood in line at the butcher's counter; concessionaires hawked men's neckties and shoe laces. It was a gray, dour day with rain in the offing and the shoppers hurried through their tasks; we finished ours and came out on the street again, grateful for two lamb chops and a couple of spareribs, shaking our head over what was left in the billfold. As we started uptown a pert young woman approached us and handed out a leaflet. Surprised, we looked around and discovered a temporary distributing stand set up just outside the market's front door. The leaflets urged support, and most of all, food, for striking workmen everywhere. They were well done in a neat mimeographing job, and faced facts succinctly and fearlessly. Why are these strikes *your* business, they asked, and answered. What was *your* husband's take-home pay a year ago and what is it now? How much more did *your* dollar buy then than now?

It developed, after questioning, that the distribution was sponsored and carried out by a neighborhood "Mother's Club"—membership made up mostly of young women with babies or very young children. All of them had felt the pinch; all of them realized their own full part in the struggles around them. The carton holding the leaflets held 1,000 packed tight—every one of them was distributed within three-quarters of an hour. A downpour began before more could be got, but not before 1,000 women, most of them with families, had read about the stake they too held in labor's fight today.

It was a good sight—as are the canned goods at this moment in NM's office hallway, waiting for the upstate strikers to pick up. Don't forget the necessity for this food—don't forget for a moment that if these men and women on picketlines are compelled to let down now, you are defeated, too. Send your money, your contributions of groceries, to this office. And don't wait. It's cold and windy and rainy outside, and the pickets are fighting *your* battle as well as theirs. They can't do it on empty stomachs.

JEB TURNER, Negro veteran, came back from the war. He came back to the South with medals and an artificial leg. He came back with a trade, proud of it, eager to practice it—and encountered the viciousness of a Southern reaction which tried only to crush him.

Jeb, written by Robert Ardrey and produced by Herman Shumlin, has recently opened in Philadelphia. Every critic went to town on the credit side. NM is proud to announce that in collaboration with American Youth for Democracy, it will sponsor two benefit performances—on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, February 27-28—of this play in New York.

You will not want to miss this—the timely and artistic presentation of one of the greatest problems of our day, directed by one of the foremost producers of his day. And we are not applying pressure or calling "Wolf" when we tell you that the best seats in the house for the two nights mentioned above are selling very fast.

Call Doretta Tarmon at NEW MASSES at once if you want to reserve seats. Prices and details will be found on page 28.

THE Detroit Art Exhibit which you've been reading about in these columns and varied ads in the back of the magazine has been postponed until the first week in May. At that time the National Negro Congress, co-sponsor of the affair, will celebrate its tenth anniversary in Detroit, and the exhibit will be held coincidentally with that event. Watch for further details.

M. DE A.

NEW MASSES
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NEW MASSES
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RAILROADING LABOR

By WELLINGTON ROE and HARRY I. BECKER

Wellington Roe, novelist and journalist, has appeared in NEW MASSES *frequently. Harry I. Becker was, until a few weeks ago, director of the Ohio School of Social Sciences at Cleveland and has been a research expert for railway labor unions for the past eight years.*

WHEN President Truman chose to throw his weight behind an anti-strike law patterned after the Railway Labor Act, he belied his own warning to Congress not to adopt "repressive or coercive measures. . . ." It is one thing to desire to promote "sincere and honest collective bargaining" for the purpose of adjusting labor controversies before work stoppages occur, but quite another to achieve this goal. The President's proposal is the product either of wishful thinking, which has always been present in government and industry circles regarding the Railway Labor Act, or of abysmal ignorance of the experiences of both labor and management under the act.

The fact of the matter is that the Railway Labor Act obstructs genuine collective bargaining. It saps the militancy of the railway labor organizations. It has worsened the economic position of railroad workers relative to employes in other industries. Its provision for Emergency Fact-Finding Boards is much overrated, for there is no guarantee against work stoppages. It provokes jurisdictional disputes by fostering craft unionism to the exclusion of industrial unionism. It impedes the development of a unified American labor movement—the surest road to industrial peace.

The Railway Labor Act specifies that the carriers and their employes must "exert every reasonable effort to make and maintain agreements concerning rates of pay, rules, and working conditions, and to settle all disputes. . . ." Disputes involving wages and working conditions must go through a lengthy process of direct negotiation, mediation, arbitration (if both parties agree), and may ultimately be aired before a President's Emergency Board. The President's board is a fact-finding body that has thirty days in which to make investigations, hold hearings, and render its report. This period may be extended by mutual agreement. The board comes into being only when a national emergency threatens to interrupt transportation, such as when the employes vote to strike. While the board is functioning, changes in conditions of employment are prohibited. The stautus quo is maintained also for thirty days following the board's report, but the board's recommendations are not binding upon either party.

Collective bargaining, insofar as national wage movements are concerned, has all but disappeared under the Railway Labor Act. Testimony by Robert F. Cole, secretary of the National Mediation Board, which administers the act, on this is strikingly frank: "Our experience in handling these national cases in the past has been that they nearly all reach an emergency board. They are very difficult to settle. They just do not settle them in direct negotiations. They are difficult to settle in mediation. The majority of them reach the stage of an emergency board."[1]

Delay in the adjustment of disputes is the most characteristic feature of the Railway Labor Act. For example, the 1943 wage movement initiated by the operating brotherhoods (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Order of Railway Conductors, Brotherhood of Trainmen, and Switchmen's Union of North America) took nearly two years from the time the demands were made on the carriers until all the issues were finally settled. It took twelve months, from Jan. 25, 1943 to Jan. 14, 1944, to process the dispute through an emergency board hearing that was so inconclusive that President Roosevelt, faced with a threatened strike, was forced to arbitrate the issues and seize control of the railroads for a period of twenty-two days. It took nearly another year to iron out objections to the vacation-with-pay provisions of the President's award and to stabilize their interpretation.

In 1941 there was a seven-month delay between the time the railroad employes filed their wage demands and the date of the wage settlement. Contrariwise, when railroad management in 1938 sought a fifteen percent wage cut, the negotiation - mediation - emergency board routine lasted also approximately seven months.

The same delaying actions are being followed currently by the carriers. Although the operating brotherhoods filed wage demands and suggested rules changes last July 24, there was a delay of four months and three days before the carriers actually sat down with their employes' representatives to engage in collective bargaining. It is freely predicted that it will take almost a year to settle the present wage controversy, and a much longer period will transpire before the rules proposals are finally disposed of.

IN THE meantime, unhampered by the tortuous procedures of the Railway Labor Act, steel workers have just won

"We're sticking to the Union!"

[1] *Hearings,* Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, on the First Deficiency Appropriation Bill for 1946, Oct. 23, 1945. Part 1, p. 79.

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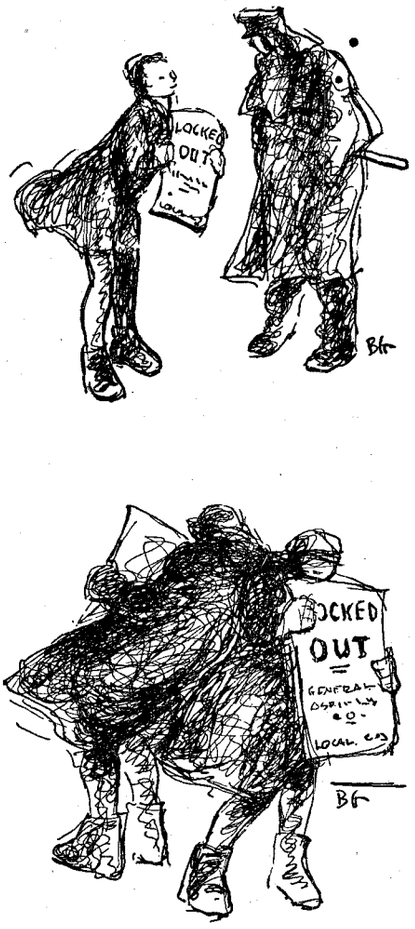

an 18½-cent hourly increase, auto workers have won 18-cent increases at Ford and Chrysler, with similar victories in the offing at General Motors, Westinghouse Electric and General Electric, and the large meat-packers. Such is the difference in achievement between militant unionism, on the one hand, and, on the other, railway labor organizations subject to sixty-day "cooling-off" periods and fact-finding that is tantamount to compulsory arbitration.

Under the Railway Labor Act, the settlement of even the most minor (although frequently infuriating) grievances are subject to months of delay. The procedure in these is for the injured employe to appeal to his local union's representative, who processes the case with the railroad's divisional superintendent. If they cannot agree, the matter is then forwarded to the union's general chairman, who is the highest representative on the railroad system. This official takes the case to the general manager or one of his designated assistants. If they cannot settle it, it is placed on a docket where it may rest from thirty days to six months pending the assignment of a Grand Lodge officer to argue the case with one of the road's vice presidents or other higher officials.

If the case cannot be settled here, it then moves to the National Railroad Adjustment Board. If it clears this tribunal in less than a year, a record for speedy adjustment has been set.

Some idea of the time required to get a decision from this board can be had through the knowledge that at the close of the year 1944, there were 5,306 unadjusted cases in the board's hands. Many of these had been docketed more than two years. It takes no imagination to visualize what goes on in the head of a railroad worker who has a disputed claim for a day's pay or perhaps a seniority claim, and who must wait two or even more years before he can receive justice.

The railroads, by refusing to accept precedents in cases before the board, have practically ruined the procedure through the simple act of insisting that every dispute be submitted for adjudication no matter how commonplace the circumstances, or how many identical situations have been passed upon. In the summer of 1945, following an involved decision by the United States Supreme Court in the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company, the railroads withdrew their membership on the board, thus bringing about a complete stoppage of its work. All this is legal and orderly routine under the Railway Labor Act.

When the act was adopted in 1926, with the blessing of Calvin Coolidge, the men of the "high iron" were truly the aristocracy of the American labor movement. Their wages were the highest in industry and, in general, their working conditions were good. Today —twenty years later—the situation is radically different.

Average weekly earnings in 1944 on Class 1 steam railroads were $45.69, in manufacturing $46.08, in anthracite mining $47.93, and in bituminous coal mining $51.27; average hourly earnings in these respective industries were $0.934, $1.019, $1.178, and $1.186. Railroad employes earned the lowest hourly and weekly wages, while their work-week was the longest. In 1944 they averaged 48.9 hours compared with 45.2 in manufacturing, 43.4 in bituminous coal mining, and 40.7 in anthracite mining.[2]

During the war years, 1939-1944, average weekly earnings of workers on Class 1 railroads did increase 48.8 percent, but in anthracite mining the increase was 86.7 percent, in manufacturing 93.1 percent, and in bituminous coal mining 114.7 percent.[3]

It would appear, from these figures, that the railroad worker has been pretty thoroughly "cooled off"; in fact the caustic critic might say he has been frozen, insofar as economic advancement under the Railway Labor Act is concerned.

THERE has never been a nation-wide railroad strike, involving all crafts, although the railroad workers have voted several times to "withdraw from service" in order to obtain satisfaction of their demands. Such a threat in 1916 compelled Congress to adopt the Adamson Eight-Hour Law, giving the employes an eight-hour-day without reduction in pay. This was a notable victory, and it is significant that it came primarily through the exercise of the united economic strength of the railroad workers.

In 1922 the employers provoked a strike of shopcraft workers through wage cuts. The refusal of the operating brotherhoods to join in the walkout was disastrous for railroad labor. There followed a decline in union memberships, which the employers speeded up by a nationwide open-shop drive heralded as the "American Plan."

In the 1941 and 1943 national railroad wage cases the findings of the emergency fact-finding boards were so outrageous that only presidential intervention prevented rail workers from "pulling the pin." In 1941 operating employes asked for a wage increase of thirty percent with a minimum increase of $1.80 per day. The Emergency Board recommended a temporary wage increase of 7½ percent, to terminate automatically on Dec. 31, 1942. The men ultimately got pay increases of seventy-six cents a day or 9½ cents an hour. Non-operating employes asked for thirty cents an hour, the board recommended nine cents, and they eventually settled for ten cents.

In September 1942, non-operating workers filed demands for increases of twenty cents an hour with a minimum hourly rate of seventy cents. An Emergency Board award of eight cents an hour was set aside by the Stabilization Director. After sixteen months of haggling, they finally won a sliding scale of wage increases ranging from nine to eleven cents an hour.

In January 1943, the five transportation brotherhoods launched a movement

[2] "War and Postwar Wages, Prices, and Hours, 1914-23, and 1939-44: Part 1," *Monthly Labor Review*, October, 1945.

[3] *Ibid.*

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for thirty percent wage increases, with a minimum increase of three dollars per day. One year later—after threatening a strike in the midst of war—they had achieved an increase of nine cents an hour, of which five cents was payment in lieu of overtime after forty hours and away-from-home expenses. They also won one week's vacation with pay—all of which was the result of personal arbitration by President Roosevelt after the Railway Labor Act fact-finding machinery had run its maddening course.

Present wage demands of non-operating railroad employes are for thirty cents an hour increase. Operating employes are asking for a minimum daily increase of $2.50, but are split two ways on the question of fighting for changes in working rules. The status-quo-minded leadership of the Firemen, Conductors and Switchmen have agreed to waive their rules demands and are now arbitrating the wage issue with the carriers, as are the fifteen non-operating unions.

The Engineers and Trainmen, however, are going ahead with their original program and are taking a strike vote following the breakdown of negotiations and mediation.

The big question is: will railroad labor carry through a nationwide strike, if the Brotherhood chiefs decide to call it? There is little doubt but that the rank and file railroad worker is militant and will go the limit to secure his demands. That was plainly evident last month in the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen's determination to strike on the Indiana Harbor Belt Railway even in the face of the appointment of a President's board. Some of that determination on the part of the union chiefs, at least, was inspired by the threat of an illegal strike by rank and filers. A complete capitulation by management to the workers' demands for compliance with certain awards of the National Railroad Adjustment Board prevented the walkout.

An important note here is that employes of the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad have been on strike since Oct. 1, 1945, because of the refusal of the management to adopt standard wages and working conditions. Railroad workers will unquestionably carry through a nationwide strike if it is called. There is increasing evidence that the railroad worker is impatient with the cumbersome procedures of the Railway Labor Act. He is demanding action from his leaders. Delay is undermining his standard of living, and he wants relief *now*.

Jurisdictional disputes further hamper the machinery of the Railway Labor Act. The act itself promotes such disputes, in that it establishes the craft or class of employes as the bargaining unit. This alone brought 162 representation cases before the National Mediation Board during the year ending June 30, 1944. With fifty-one cases on hand at the beginning of that year, there was a total of 213 requiring the board's services. Only 139 of these were disposed of. During the ten-year period of 1935 to 1944, the board acted upon 434 *inter-union* disputes.

It will be seen from this that the Railway Labor Act does not do any of the things President Truman and other admirers claim for it. It does not speed the settlement of labor controversies. Far from preventing jurisdictional disputes, it promotes them. It substitutes what is tantamount to compulsory arbitration for collective bargaining. It hampers the swift settlement of grievances. Worst of all, it has placed railroad workers in the unenviable position of trailing the rest of labor in the present historic struggles for decent wages.

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ART AND POLITICS

By HOWARD FAST

IN MUCH of the discussion raised by Albert Maltz in his NEW MASSES piece, "What Shall We Ask of Writers?" there has been a tendency to ignore the core of his position, the theoretical premise upon which he bases himself; and to engage instead in heated charge and countercharge concerning those many straw men which he not only destroys, but which he created for that very purpose. Thereby, fuel has been added to his fire—without too much inquiry as to what, precisely, was burning.

Also, by this process, dignity was lent to a piece which did not deserve it; but the fact is there; and whether or not we like it, the position of left-wing writing—or Marxist writing—in America must be stated in terms of the Maltz position: that is, it must be stated as a refutation of certain theoretical postulates Maltz makes. I say this because, as I intend to show, the end product of Maltz's direction is liquidation, not only of Marxist creative writing—but of all creative writing which bases itself on progressive currents in America; and this is the more unfortunate since that process of liquidation has been under way for a good while now.

Formerly, the need was to correct this trend toward liquidation; now the trend has a formal apostle, and an ideology of literary liquidation has been presented, however thin that ideology is. The task is more difficult, but more necessary; the very fact that the boil has come to a head makes it imperative that it be lanced.

The first task is to understand precisely why and how the Maltz position is liquidationist—and by virtue of that, anti-progressive — and in its final form, reactionary. Unless we brush aside the straw men Maltz has set up, we will stand upon ground as uncertain as that which he chose for himself.

What then is the core of Maltz's article? Not the charges he levels against criticism, for even he himself admits that those charges are of a tactical rather than a theoretical nature; *criticism* is one of the chief straw men he poses, and there his position is a comfortable one; for who is there in the literary left-wing who has not recognized and protested certain critical failings of the Marxist press? Of course, we are not free from critical mistakes, vulgarity, incompetence; this we know, and the reasons for the situation are manifold. Some of these critical failings we have corrected; others we will correct. And if Maltz had merely intended to add his voice to the many that are already raised against our critical failings, no one could have had a real difference with him. Indeed, such criticism is healthy.

But Maltz's attack on left-wing criticism is merely a cover for his theoretical approach to left-wing creative writing. When you come to his estimation of the Marxist as an artist, there are no straw men to confuse the issue. Flatly and baldly, Maltz says: ". . . Engels understood that a writer may be confused, or even stupid and reactionary in his thinking—and yet it is possible for him to do good, even great, work as an artist—work that even serves ends he despises. *This point is critical for an understanding of art and artists!*"

The italics are mine. But the sentence italicized is the core of Maltz's position, and the word *critical* is the peg upon which he hangs his entire premise.

Why, we must inquire, is this point which Maltz singles out *critical* to our understanding of art and artists? If it is critical—and that is a term of absolute usage—to our understanding, then we are at least led toward presuming that confusion, stupidity, and a reactionary position are all qualities of art. And, conversely, clarity and understanding are detrimental to art.

We note in passing that Maltz does not quote Engels, but hinges his statement on his own interpretation of what Engels understands. This is a fallacious and opportunistic method of supporting a premise. But once embarked on that premise, Maltz goes on to state:

"An artist can be a great artist without being an integrated or a logical or a progressive thinker on all matters."

BUT who has denied that? And to take two ends of a historic pole, when has the Left claimed that either Shakespeare or Dreiser was an integrated, logical, and progressive thinker on all matters, and when has the Left denied that either of them was a great artist? One must look deeper than the obvious to understand why Maltz indulges in platitudes and truisms, and why he puts them forth with such a thunderous crash. And in the following statement, Maltz begins to reveal his true intentions:

"For instance, in sections of *Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck writes a veritable poem to revolution. Yet we would be making an error to draw conclusions from this about Steinbeck's personal philosophy, or to be surprised when he writes *Cannery Row* with its mystic paean to Bohemianism."

Here, indeed, is something to make one's hair stand on end, were we not lulled so by the platitudes with which Maltz sprinkles the first part of his article. Not only can we draw conclusions from this about Steinbeck's personal philosophy, but Steinbeck forces us to draw those conclusions. We cannot deny them. His books themselves are the clearest statements of a personal philosophy that can be put forth; and one does not have to be a seer, as Maltz suggests, to realize that the philosophy of *Grapes of Wrath* was a militant, class-conscious philosophy, derived from close contact and sympathy with the working class, while the philosophy of *Cannery Row* is a disgusting neo-fascist philosophy, spurning the very essentials of life.

No, it is not an error to draw such conclusions—no more of an error than it would be to conclude that Maltz, in his two novels, was motivated by a class-conscious philosophy—no more than it is to see a new philosophy in this current statement of Maltz.

The Left has never denied change; it strives to understand change, which is the very essence of dialectics. But Maltz argues that change cannot be understood, and, in the above-quoted passage, he takes a familiar change in the position of intellectuals today, the change from progressivism to reaction, and denies that it has either meaning or importance.

By now, we begin to arrive at the fact of Maltz's position. It is summed up in his own words:

"Writers must be judged by their work, and *not* by the committees they join. It is the job of the editorial section of a magazine to praise or attack citizens' committees for what they stand for. It is the job of the literary critics to appraise the literary works only."

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What a quiet and reasonable ring that has! But in the light of what has gone before, Maltz has arrived at his position, which rests on a double separation: firstly, a separation between politics and art; and secondly, a separation between art and life.

While we recognize that such a separation cannot exist, under any circumstances, we must also recognize that the statement of such a separation, however puerile, will attract certain trends of thought. The important factor is not merely that the position is a false one, but that because of its very falsity it leads inevitably to liquidation—whether that liquidation manifests itself in artistic decay, political reaction, or both. And so beguiled is Maltz by his own shoddy formulation, that in the very next paragraph he leaps to the defense of the Trotskyist, James T. Farrell. And once again, incredibly now, he drags in Engels to defend both Farrell and Wright. He sees no politics in either of these gentry, but when he adds Koestler, he does so with an apologetic note:

"Koestler, for instance, always writes with a political purpose so organic to his work that it affects his rendering of character, theme, etc. He must be judged accordingly."

I MUST confess that the word *accordingly* leaves me somewhat bewildered. Koestler's politics affects his rendering of character, but the writing of Farrell and Wright is miraculously unaffected by any taint of personal politics. And all three are to be beautified by Engels who, as Maltz rendered him before, assures us:

". . . that a writer may be confused, or even stupid and reactionary in his thinking—and yet, it is possible for him to do good, even great, work as an artist—work that even serves ends he despises."

I presume that whatever good earth covers Engels must be in motion, as he reflects upon the progressive ends served by that astonishing and far from admirable trio, Farrell, Wright and Koestler. But let us not be taken in by the devious convolutions in which Albert Maltz indulges.

For as Maltz goes on to develop his thesis fully, his purpose becomes plain beyond dispute:

Art and politics do not mix. Therefore, salvation—and, of course, achievement—for the artist lie only in a separation from the Communist movement, the most highly political of all movements today. No matter how he slices it, embroiders it, or disguises it, that is what Maltz advocates. He *advocates*, for the artist, retreat. He pleads with him to get out of the arena of life. The fact that life shows, and has shown for a generation now, that such retreat is tantamount to artistic death and personal degradation, cuts no ice with Maltz. Evidently, there are other factors that weigh more importantly with him. I do not know Maltz; I do not know what those factors might be; but as a writer—and sometimes, I hope, an artist—I resent fiercely his using the bogyman of art to destroy art. That is one of the more objectionable forms of philistinism.

"Hoovervilles? I should say not. They're for rent."

Defending his position, once he has arrived at it, Maltz states:

"Writing is a complex process, and the sources of creative inspiration, out of which an artist works, are *exceedingly* complex."

Now this is beyond dispute, but it must be remembered that life itself, in its very manifestation, is *exceedingly* complex, and it presents its rich and wonderful and complex face to every human being, not alone to the artist; and every human being, to one degree or another, creates out of that complexity.

The writer, however, has a singular responsibility; for he must select from life those factors which suit his purpose; he must turn them into word-pictures and thought-pictures; and he must arrange them on paper in such juxtaposition, taking into consideration rhythm and emotion of sound and beauty of phrase, as to achieve that rare and splendid result we call art. Sometimes he succeeds; sometimes he does not; for in the best of worlds, art is not common. But unless he can engage in his original selection with a degree of clarity and understanding, and unless he can bring to his appraisal of life that relationship with life which we call philosophy, he will fail—even if he has the talent of the gods.

Webster defines politics as the art of government; but when we speak of politics in terms of the average citizen, we refer to that citizen's relationship to both the state and that class which uses the state as its instrument. And in the broadest sense, the relationship of the twentieth-century American to society is a political one. To ask that a writer divorce himself from politics is to ask that he exile himself from civilization; to ask that he be unaffected by changes in the political weather, is to ask that he relinquish his sensitivity to life. To do either is to abandon art, for art and life do not exist separately.

No, art can only be art when it is the result of a man's thoughtful relationship with society, and the closer, the more intimate, the more understanding the relationship, the greater the art. Out of the love, the compassion, the hatred, the sorrow, the despair produced by that relationship, down through the ages, has come the great art we know and remember.

This is a difficult statement to deny,

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but see what Maltz does with the theory that the writer should react in humane terms to his environment. Maltz says:

"Almost inevitably, the earnest writer, concerned about his fellow man, aware of the social crisis, begins to think of his work as only another form of leaflet writing. Perhaps he comes to no such conscious conclusions. But he does so in effect—and he begins to use his talent for an immediate political end. If the end is good, it would be absurd to say that this may not be socially useful. It would also be highly inaccurate to maintain that from an approach like this *no* art can result. On the other hand, I believe that the failure of much left-wing talent to mature is a comment on how restricting this canon is for the creator in practice."

Once again, the reasonable words and the complete negation. According to Maltz, three factors are destructive of art: sincerity, concern for one's fellow man, and awareness of the social crisis.

Again, according to Maltz, confusion, stupidity, and reaction are no real detriment to art. For these three factors, he has no harsh words.

From all of this, one cannot help but draw some unpleasant conclusions. It is no simple and straightforward attack upon left-wing criticism that Maltz puts forward. Underlying all of his arguments is a rejection of the whole progressive movement in America. It is no accident that he singles out Farrell, Wright, and Koestler to bolster an inherently reactionary point of view; nor is it an accident that he ignores the fact that for fifty years now, from Jack London to young Arthur Miller, almost every American writer of stature has drawn strength, sustenance, and a living philosophy from the left-wing movement.

Left-wing art is the result of a conscious use by the artist of a scientific understanding of society, of an identification with the working class, that class which is vital and in the ascendancy, and of a sharing of the vital ideology of that class. Such art is always a weapon —a weapon in the struggle for a better world.

Unhappily, the art which Maltz enthrones is the art of rejection, and, in the end, of annihilation. His own books, however, are a direct refutation of the theory he now propounds. He himself provided the best of arguments, in his work, for left-wing writing.

Yet he must be reminded that the road he charts here leads to sterility—whether it be the sterility of the esthete, the mediocrity, or the neo-fascist.

NO RETREAT FOR THE WRITER

By JOSEPH NORTH

FEW would disagree, I believe, that we in America today live in an epoch that witnesses a gigantic conflict for the minds of men. Those at the controls of our nation have unleashed the most powerful propaganda campaign of our time. The lords of the trusts, surfeited with billions, are acutely conscious, and consequently fearful, of the surging opposition of the people, and primarily of the working class.

In this assault the enemies of the people have drawn up their heaviest guns against those of the working class who possess the clearest views of our times—those most prescient of reality—the vanguard of the working class, the Communists. There is a frenetic fear of Marxist ideas, of the Marxist world outlook, of its uncompromising criticism of capitalism's crimes, and of its socialist solutions.

The attack upon Marxist ideas obtains in every field, without exception. A heavy load of anti-Marxist books is being hauled to print by commercial publishers — vile, scurrilous works like Trotsky's "biography" of Stalin, the traitor Kravchenko's "memoirs," the renegade Louis Budenz' book, and others too numerous to mention here.

There is reason for this violence: the people of the world are on the move, challenging the age-old shibboleths of capitalist life.

The capitalist assault assumes various guises. One of these is represented by Earl Browder, who under false colors maligns and seeks to crush the most advanced sector of the working class, the Communists. Browder strives to undermine Marxism, to smash the party of Marxism. He has been expelled from the Party; his ideas have rightly been branded for what they are—the ideas of monopoly capitalism.

Today the struggle for clarity of basic theory is of utmost importance for the working class, and its allies in the cause of progress.

I believe that this background is most pertinent to the discussion of ideas in the cultural field as in all other fields. It is pertinent to the ideas in Albert Maltz' article in NM, Feb. 12, 1946. Elsewhere in this issue Howard Fast presents his reaction to Albert Maltz' thesis. I wish herein to dwell on what appear to me to be a few fundamental points.

As our readers will recall we began a discussion on literary and cultural questions in our October 6 issue, with an article by Isidor Schneider, that reported several meetings held in NM's offices by a group of left-wing writers and artists. We sought to examine their problems, those of left-wing literature, and the arts, and to lay the basis for rapid improvement in our Marxist approaches to culture. We recognize that much spadework had to be done here: we of the Left are far from satisfied with the record of achievements in this field. Maltz' article came in response to a general invitation to writers to contribute their ideas on these issues. We know that we do not have all the answers to the problem of strengthening the literary Left; we are searching for them, and we shall continue, in these pages, and elsewhere, to search for them.

But one thing I do know: that Maltz, raising his criticisms, does so within a context which is fundamentally false. No gardener would chop down a tree to cure some weak branches. The logic of Maltz' position proposes this. He would, if his counsel were heeded, destroy the fruitful tree of Marxism. His is an anti-Marxist position.

For this reason I believe, NEW MASSES was seriously at fault in failing to initiate the discussion with criticisms framed in a firm Marxist context. The only way to build a powerful left-wing cultural movement in our land is through a Marxist approach. Whatever elements of validity may appear in Maltz' criticisms, they are more than cancelled out by his fundamental thesis that has nothing in common with Marxism.

HERE is why I think so: in Maltz' objection to the "narrow" concept of "art as a weapon" which he attributes

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to the Left, in his avowed intention to "broaden" that concept, he would abandon the weapon altogether. Maltz attributes the mistakes of left-wing writing and criticism to the "intellectual atmosphere of the left wing." He attributes that error to "a vulgarization of the theory of art which lies behind left-wing thinking: namely, 'art is a weapon.'" That phrase, as Samuel Sillen has pointed out in the *Daily Worker*, is "merely one of the sloganized forms in which the general theory is expressed. The theory of art which lies, or should lie, behind 'left-wing' thinking, is Marxism." This world outlook, which has amply proved itself as *the* social science. is the basis for the perception of truth. This is the *sine qua non* of our argument. This is what, by the logic of his argument, Maltz would abandon.

He departs from Marxism when he cleaves the writer in two—seeing him as "citizen" and as "artist." He says, in various ways and explicitly, "It is the job of the editorial section of the magazine to praise or attack citizens committees for what they stand for. It is the job of the literary critics to appraise literary works only."

This is only one form of Maltz' rigid and mechanical division of politics and art. He separates the writer from citizen, separates a man's acts and thought from his art, a man's world outlook from his artistic creation. This orientation toward the writer of our time has nothing in common with Marxism.

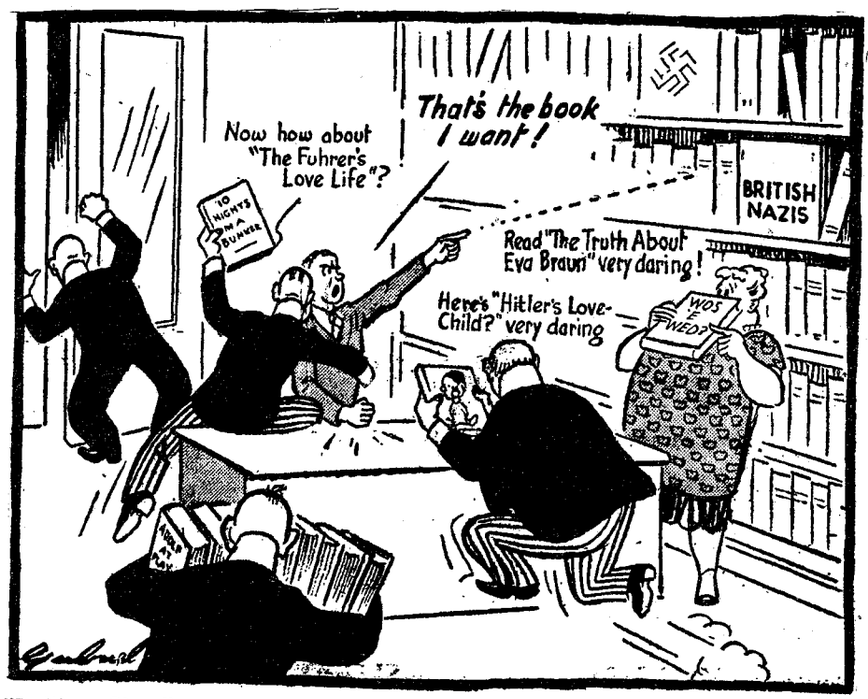
For we cannot approach the writer as a special kind of man who is above classes, who can depict reality by ignoring the fundamental reality of our life—the struggle between classes.

This approach leads to Maltz' position on James T. Farrell, which is, I feel, a key expression of the fundamental falsity of his position. Maltz argues that we should consider Farrell's writings, as distinct from Farrell as "citizen." The very euphemism which Maltz employs: "I don't like the committees" to which Farrell belongs, is an earmark of the howling error into which his position leads him. What committee is he referring to? It is no secret that Farrell belongs to the Trotskyite conspiracy, and I don't think it is necessary to elaborate that further here. The Trotskyites have been proved enemies of the people, traitors to their country and to the working class. Maltz' present position is diametrically opposed to what he wrote in NM several weeks ago in discussing the case of Ezra Pound. There Maltz wrote: "When a poet becomes the enemy of Man—when a poet stoops to the vile selfishness of racial hatred—when a poet, who inherits the humanitarian culture of the ages betrays his heritage and his talents to fascist thieves, sadists and murderers—then what is he? He is unspeakable—he is carrion." If any of our readers are still unaware that Trotskyism stands for essentially the same things Pound stands for, I would refer them to the invaluable, recently-published book, *The Great Conspiracy*, by Albert Kahn and Michael Sayers. In effect what Maltz proposes would lead him to sit down at a table with "carrion" and discuss "literary works." As well to sit down with Ezra Pound and discuss poetry.

IN ALL I am saying, I wish it to be understood that I do not ignore many real weaknesses in the literary Left. But I do not think we are today making the blunders Maltz speaks of. He fails, I believe, to credit the Left with its achievements, its present attitudes. Nobody has prevented Maltz from writing the kind of books he wishes; that he must admit in all honesty. Nobody of the Left told him how to write *The Cross and the Arrow*, or the current movies he may be working on. Nobody told Ben Field, Meridel Le Sueur, nor any other writer, to write the kind of book he has written, nor told him how to write it, nor told him how much "class struggle" he should put in, nor told him he must have a "conversion ending"—nor have the Marxist critics in recent times raised any such issue that I know of. The Left does not now—nor does it intend to—"narrow" any writer's work. Has Maltz found more "freedom" in the "intellectual atmosphere" of the Right?

It is indisputable that errors have been made in the past, and are still being made by Left critics. Basically, such errors flow from an insufficient mastery of Marxism. Maltz's position, however, leads not to a mastery of Marxism, but to its abandonment.

Maltz departs from the principal contention of the Left, "Literature must become a part of the proletarian cause as a whole." The man who said that, Maltz would admit, had a prescience far beyond any man of his time. His name was Lenin. The Left writer, that Marxist scientist declared, must become identified with the cause of the working class, with its vanguard, the Marxists, and derive from them the full strength of their world outlook, of their aspirations, of their reality as the nascent class of our time—which is the fundamental truth of these days. A literature based upon such integration will be, as Lenin says, "free because rather than careerism and pecuniary motives it will be the socialist cause and sympathy with workers that will draw ever new forces into its ranks . . . this free literature will infuse the last word of mankind's revolutionary thought with the experi-


Now how about "The Fuhrer's Love Life"?
That's the book I want!
BRITISH NAZIS
Read "The Truth About Eva Braun" very daring!
Here's "Hitler's Love-Child?" very daring

"Bedtime Story"—a comment on British book-publishing. Gabriel, in the London *Daily Worker*.

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ence and the living work of the socialist proletariat, it will create a permanent interaction between the experience of the past (scientific socialism culminating the development of socialism out of its primitive, utopian form) and the experience of the present (the active struggle of worker-comrades)." Will Maltz, the author of *The Underground Stream*, deny this? Will Maltz, the author of "Man on the Road," published in NEW MASSES a decade ago, deny this?

Yes, we of the literary Left fully agree with Lenin when he says, "There can be no doubt that literature is the last thing to lend itself to mechanical equalization, to levelling, to domination of the majority over the minority. There can be no doubt that in this field it is absolutely necessary that the widest latitude be assured to personal initiative and individual inclinations, to thought and imagination, to form and content. All this is beyond dispute, but all this proves only that the literary aspect of the work of a proletarian party cannot be identified in a stereotyped manner with the other aspects of its work." I believe we have made and are making mistakes, in the proper understanding of this injunction of Lenin's. But I believe we will shortly master it, because we believe fundamentally with Lenin when he says, "Literature must become a part of the proletarian cause as a whole."

To conclude, NEW MASSES welcomes a full discussion of the artist's role and problems today, within the context of a Marxist and progressive approach to the issues involved. That is the reason for this brief piece, in which I have indicated only a few of the fundamentals in question. We shall return to this subject in subsequent issues, and indicate further NEW MASSES', and the Left's, responsibility on this subject.

Finally, I wish to underscore the imperative need for the mastery by all Left writers of the Marxist science. Without that, in the framework of the struggle for progress today, there will be unclarity, further confusion, and halting advance, if not retreat.

YOU WERE VERY YOUNG

A Short Story by EDWARD AMEJKO

YOUR father was home quite a lot now. As always, he went out in the morning before you were dressed by your mother. But now he came home early, right after your sister went to school. Before, he was gone all day. When the whistles blew late in the afternoon, you knew it was a signal that your father would soon be home, and you'd wait for him. But now he was home almost all day, except for a short time in the morning.

At first, he kept busy around the house. There was always something to do. He cut the grass and raked it. He fixed the back porch, and he put a new roof on the garage. Your father didn't have a car any more, but the lady next door kept her car in the garage.

But after a time, he stayed in the house more and more, just sitting. It seemed that he waited all day for the newspaper to be delivered. He'd look at the paper for a long time, searching for something, studying it. Then the paper wasn't delivered any more.

Your small bed was moved into your parents' bedroom and your room was closed up. Winter had come. Your room had never been closed up before, but there were so many things that were different now that you didn't bring up the subject.

But there were some things that you did ask about. For example, about all the washing and ironing that suddenly took up your mother's time.

"Mama, we have a lot of new clothes now, don't we?"

"No, dear, these are curtains, sheets, and pillow cases, and such, not clothes," she said. "And they're not ours."

"But you're ironing them, Mama."

"Mama gets paid for washing and ironing them."

"Then why doesn't Papa do it, Mama?"

You became frightened at the sudden silence in the room. Your mother stopped ironing but kept her eyes on the ironing board for a long time. Then you followed her gaze at your father, who was sitting at the kitchen table. He lowered his eyes when his gaze met your mother's and yours.

"Margaret!" your mother called to your sister. "Margaret! Put your brother's hat and coat on him and take him out to play in the snow. Make a snow man for him."

Your sister obeyed.

She took your hand and led you to the bedroom. You let her button your coat and followed her out of the house.

YOUR sister had to make the snow man without any help from you. She saw your eyes struggling to keep the tears back.

"Tommy, don't be a little baby!"

You burst out crying.

"I'm not a baby! I'm not! I'm not!"

She ran over to you and, leaning, put both her arms around you.

"I won't say it any more, cross my heart," she entreated. "Don't cry. I won't say it any more, honest, Tommy."

It felt good to be soothed by her.

"If you cry," she added, "you'll make Mama and Papa feel worse."

"Mama and Papa don't laugh any more," you said.

"Papa is sick, that's why," Margaret said.

"Does Papa have tummy aches too?"

"Mama told me it's worse than a tummy ache," she said.

You wondered why Mama confided in your sister and not in you. You were never informed of all these things. It made you feel slighted and hurt. You sat there glumly, shivering in your seat of snow, while your sister went on with the making of the snow man. Then Margaret asked you to look for two small pieces of coal for the snow man's eyes.

IN THE evening, long after you were put in your small bed, you lay awake. Awake because you were not tired? No. More likely because you were hungry.

You thought of Mama and Papa, of snow men, of cookies, and of jam on bread.

The light came into the room from the kitchen through the partly opened door, and you knew that your mother and father must be sitting there. But you didn't hear their voices.

It was a long time after that your mother and father came into the bedroom. You closed your eyes and pretended you were asleep.

"Don't turn on the light," you heard

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your mother whisper. "You'll wake Tommy."

No answer from your father.

You heard the tinkle of your father's belt and the soft thump of his shoes as he put them on the floor. Your mother went back to the kitchen and, after a few minutes, turned the kitchen light out.

There was a muffled swishing of clothing, and then you heard your mother get into bed.

You tried not to breathe, for you became conscious of it in the silence of the room. Your arm seemed lifeless and you wanted to turn on your back.

Your father's coughing broke into the quiet of the room. You turned on your back, taking advantage of the break in the silence.

"Do you still have pains?" your mother whispered.

Your father coughed again. Silence, and then your mother's voice again.

"I want you to be well. It frightens me."

"It's better than it was," your father whispered back, deep. "Only sometimes it comes, like two huge hands tightening on my back and chest. But it's not as bad as last week."

"Perhaps we should go to a doctor, like I said."

"I'm all right," your father said. "He'd just take the money and say I'm all right."

They became silent and you thought they were asleep until your father whispered again.

"If something doesn't turn up soon, I'll go out of my head!"

"Of course something will come along," your mother said. "And until then, we'll manage with washing and ironing, we'll manage until. . . ."

"That's not the way!" your father said loudly. "I don't want it that way!"

"Sh-h! You'll wake Tommy."

It seemed that the house reechoed your father's loud words.

"You musn't put more into Tommy's words than was actually there," your mother said. "He's only a child. He didn't mean anything by it."

Your father did not answer. "If we could only start over, from the beginning again!" he said at last.

"And not have the children?"

"Oh, we'd have the children," your father whispered. "They'd be a boy and a girl, a Tommy and a Margaret. They came out of our love, and it would be the same. But if we could start over again, a different job, something with a future. . . . Like dreaming!"

"As long as we're together, it doesn't matter," you heard your mother say. "These years have been my happiest. Nothing else matters. Everything else will come out for the best. If it could not be like this, together for always, then I would not want to live!"

Then the momentary silence came into the room again, until your father said quietly, "You're the best wife anyone could have, and I love you very much."

You listened. And your entire being filled with a loneliness; even though you were hurt, you insisted unmercifully to yourself that you were unwanted and unloved. And you listened.

T. Fuchs.

As soon as you finished your milk and bread at breakfast, you spoke up.

"I want to sleep in my old room, Mama."

Your mother turned from the stove and stood looking at you.

"Why, Tommy, is something wrong?"

"I want my room," you persisted. "I like my room."

Your mother continued to scrutinize you.

"Your room is closed off for the winter. It's cold in there, Tommy. You don't want to sleep in a cold, cold room, do you?"

"Then I want to sleep in Margaret's room."

"Oh, shame! Margaret is a girl."

"You're a girl, and I sleep in your room," you said.

A smile came to your mother's face and suddenly it vanished as she looked past you, to the door.

It was your father. His face was white as the snow outside, and he moved slowly, painfully. Your mother gave a little scream and rushed to him. Without closing the door, your mother helped him to the bedroom. She was there only a brief moment and then rushed past you, out the open door.

You sat at the table, where you were, frightened. You heard your father's harsh breathing and the loud ticking of the kitchen clock. Your mother rushed back into the house with the woman next door. She was old, and hurried to keep up with your mother.

You looked into the bedroom and the woman had her hand on your father's forehead.

"Take his coat and shoes off and get him under the covers," the woman said. "I'll find someone to go for the doctor."

In the endless time that followed, your father's breathing seemed to become louder and louder, more and more harsh. Until the woman came back, your mother went from the bedroom to the kitchen window, from the window to the bedroom, watching, waiting. And your mother began to sob loudly. You cried when you saw her crying.

Without seeming to realize it, she put her arm out to you, but as soon as you stepped to her side, she forgot you were there and returned to her vigil at the window. When the neighbor woman returned, she alternated with your mother, going from the bedroom to the kitchen window.

The doctor came into the kitchen through the waiting open door.

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"He's here, doctor," your mother said, showing him into the bedroom. "Please, please help him."

The doctor took off his overcoat and went into the bedroom with his black case with big gold initials on the side. Your mother and the neighbor stood in the doorway of the bedroom, watching.

You heard the doctor say, "I should have been called earlier. Weeks ago."

Your mother stood there with her hand to her mouth. She was no longer crying. She stared into the bedroom and did not turn around when your sister came into the kitchen, home for dinner from school.

The neighbor went to Margaret and helped take off her coat.

"Your father is very sick," the woman said. "The doctor is here. Take your brother into the other room, like a good girl."

Without speaking, your sister took your hand and led you to the other room. You both sat in the big chair, which your father had always sat in. You waited, not knowing for what.

THE neighbor woman stayed all afternoon and in the evening she was still there. She left only once, but returned immediately with a plate of food, which she heated and gave to your sister and you to eat.

It was getting dark already when the priest came. While he was in the bedroom, with the door closed, your mother came to the kitchen. She sat at the table and covered her face with her arms. When she looked up once at you and your sister, you saw that her eyes were lost in the redness surrounding them and her hair was not like it usually was. She looked old, like the neighbor woman.

She went back to the bedroom when the priest left.

And later still, other neighbors came to your house and went to the bedroom.

As before, your sister and you were sitting in Papa's chair. You wanted to show her that you too were informed. So you said, "I heard Mama and Papa talking last night."

You were disappointed, for she didn't seem interested in this bit of news. She sat there, looking straight ahead.

"Papa told Mama that he didn't want us."

Your sister quickly turned her head toward you when you spoke those words.

Sitting there at your side, she stared at you and her eyes seemed to drill into yours.

"You awful thing, you!" she said. Deliberately, slow and exacting, she raised her hand and slapped you with all her strength.

Your outcries brought the neighbor woman instantly.

"My God, what's wrong with the child!" she exclaimed, looking from you to Margaret.

Margaret was standing now.

"He said a terrible, terrible thing," she said, "and I slapped him in the

What the Train Said

Sure, said the train, big fast train
I am the thread that sews America
I stitch the plain to a far-off lane
The days puff by, but I remember

Boy with a slingshot on a smoky day
Pocket of stones, lunch in a sack
After the hike to four-mile river
He climbed the willow beside the track.

He was a fabulous sun-berry
His eyes held a basket of wonder
Blackbirds sang in a cat-tail swamp
I went by slow, so I remember

Youth on the highway, hitching a ride
Suitcase stuffed with shirts and a home
A lonesome sky was wild with rain
And Texas dogs fought for a bone

He had a face to hide in the wind
His eyes shook a fistful of hunger
Heart ran away with a coal black stone
I went by fast, but I remember

Sentinel soldiers at edge of camp
Pistol sure, a ramrod figure
Sun-burned barracks and trucks on a ramp
And afternoon shadows grew bigger

He had shoulders of skyline
His hands were friendly with thunder
A daylight moon leaned on his gun
I passed him last, so I remember

And said the train, long dark train
I am the spoon that stirs the night
On echo road sparks are my wheelsteps
And my pale head lamp has second sight:

All dressed up in a giant's clothes
He stands like a dream beside the rail
Lightning punched a one-way ticket
When he came back on a passing whale.

He draws a picture in fat black dust
Run-away lines with feet like plows
He hums a tune from the book of wishes—
A sure-footed song everyone knows

For now he walks on a path of grapes
And his footprints shine like an ember
He knows a way for a world to go—
This, said the train, I'll remember.

FLOYD WALLACE.

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face." The woman muttered something to herself and wiped your eyes.

"Come now, you don't want to have your father see you crying, do you?" she said. And then she too had tears in her eyes. "It's the last time and you must look nice for him."

She took Margaret by one hand and you by the other and led you both to the bedroom.

You stood awkwardly inside the doorway.

Your father's face was the color of the ash pile out in the back yard. Only his hair and eyes, looking up at the ceiling as if unseeing, stood out in contrast. His hands were outside the covers; in one hand he held a lighted candle which seemed too heavy for his grip, and in the other hand he held a crucifix. Your mother was bending over one side of the bed, and the neighbors stood about, watching as if they were being forced to watch.

"Go kiss your father," the neighbor woman whispered to your sister and you.

Margaret went to the bed and kissed your father on the cheek, but you could not move from the doorway, stunned by your father's breathing, rasping in and out, in and out, fast.

Margaret returned to where you were standing, and the neighbor woman bent over you and whispered again, "Go kiss your father."

You stood stiff, then turned and ran to the other room. You heard your mother's voice but did not know what she had said. Then Margaret and the neighbor woman came to the room.

"Where is your brother's coat?"

"It's in Mama's bedroom," your sister said.

"We'll use the blanket then," the neighbor said to Margaret. "Put on your coat and I'll take you and Tommy to my house to sleep. That's a good girl."

She took a blanket from Margaret's bed, folded it, and wrapped it around your head and shoulders like a cape.

You went with her and Margaret out the kitchen door into the cold winter night. The glistening snow made the night look as cold as it was.

You hurried along between your sister and the neighbor woman, the blanket flopping around your legs. You still could hear your father's breathing in your ears. And the thought came to your mind: Papa doesn't like me, Mama doesn't like me, and Margaret doesn't like me because she slapped me.

The snow crunched and creaked. It was very cold.

DO WE FACE A CRIME WAVE?

By RICHARD GRAY

Guns and soldiers seem natural enough companions to the average American, as natural as doughnuts and coffee. Unfortunately, many also associate guns with criminals, with the result that we actually find many Americans mentally locking up their valuables in fearful anticipation of the "veteran problem."

Since the soldier is taught to "kill or be killed" (one of the training films he was shown even bears that title) certain civilians find it quite logical to wonder whether brother GI Joe will be tame when he comes home. Some fear that the veteran will wish to settle scores with the profiteers who have waxed rich at his family's expense. Others expect (or hope) that the unions will "get theirs" for having gone on strike during wartime, occurrences which they continue to magnify despite proof to the contrary.

Fear that the Negro veteran will not "know his place," while centered in the South, is also fostered in many high tension war production areas in the North. In part, then, it is fear, fear of a presumably unknown quantity—the returning veteran—that nourishes the belief that a crime wave is on its way.

This fear is, perhaps, strongest among those solid citizens whose personal conditions, if changed at all, have been entrenched and enriched during the course of the war. By innuendo and explicit declaration they brand the veteran as a potential criminal, as a special menace. By doing so they hope to conceal from themselves and from others the immorality, and often criminality, of their own wartime behavior. But they cannot admit their guilt, even to themselves. So they cling to and popularize through the press and other media the pseudo-scientific theory that war must inevitably be followed by severe dislocations of a kind which foster crime. These, they say, may be due to demobilization, unemployment and the resettling of migrated war workers.

The principal error of this theory is that none of this is inevitable. The experience of the last war shows these dislocations come about only when nothing (or the wrong thing) is done. It is precisely the experience of the last war, however, which some claim justifies the expectation of increased crime in the postwar period. Between 1919 and 1921 the nation's periodicals and newspapers were aglow with excited headlines about the new "crime wave." The *Literary Digest,* for example, saw fit to print articles on "America's High Tide of Crime," and "Accounting for the Crime Wave."

Also standing up to be counted were the *Nation* and the *New Republic* which described "The Crime Wave in America," and "The Crime Wave and Remedies" in a more literary, if not more profound manner. All of these agreed on one point: that the crime wave was "the logical aftermath of the war."

Today, when criminologists look back upon that hectic period, they not only begin to wonder whether the crime wave was a logical aftermath, but also whether it was really the aftermath at all. They are not in the least sure that there *was* a postwar crime wave.

The available statistics indicate that during the three decades between 1900 and 1930, if traffic offenses and drunkenness are excluded, there was, as the criminologist Edwin Sutherland claims, "a slight upward trend during this period, with no sudden upward surge that could be called a crime wave." The average number of homicides per 100,000 people was on the increase in the United States prior to the last war and simply continued to rise following it.

Several conclusions may be drawn from these facts. First, inasmuch as the homicide rate was on the increase prior to the last war, the war in itself cannot reasonably be considered as the explanation for its continued increase. Factors in American life, apart from the war or its dislocations, were evidently raising the homicide rate.

Another clear conclusion is that the American veteran did not come home a

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killer. The postwar increase in homicide might have been expected had our men gone to war or not. Dixon Wechter probably states the case fairly in his book, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home:* "Inquiry into mobs, vigilantes, and klansmen has at no time fixed the most flagrant blame upon the soldier."

In 1923, the Census Bureau published a study of *The Prisoner's Antecedents* which tends to confirm this general thesis. The report showed that war veterans sentenced to prison were less likely to have been convicted of homicide, carrying concealed weapons, burglary, and assault, than those who had not seen military service. In other words, non-veterans were more likely to have been sentenced for violent crimes than veterans.

The myth that the veteran becomes a "killer" because "they gave him a gun" doesn't hold water. When he commits any sort of a crime he does so for very much the same reasons that other people do.

WHY does anyone commit a crime, become a racketeer, burglar, thief, or murderer? The answer to this question all too often depends upon whom you ask. Following the last war, when the term "crime wave" was initiated into the American vocabulary, those with an anti-labor bias had their own sort of solution. They blamed the dimming of the street lights, which, they were quick to add, was due to the shortage of coal brought on by the miners' strike of 1919. The darkened streets, it was explained, encouraged crime because they enhanced the criminal's feeling of confidence and also enabled him to make an easier get-away.

Another version of this "get-away" theory was held by those who were still suspicious of the automobile. It was the auto, these people claimed, which must be held responsible for the crime wave because it permitted the crook easily to elude the clutches of the law. (Naturally, the car dealers objected.)

It was inevitable, also, that the debate about prohibition should have touched upon this subject. The WCTU'ers, of course, pointed the accusing finger at John Barleycorn. Their opponents, still underground, declared that, on the contrary, it was the prohibitionists who had fostered the crime wave by making it necessary to smuggle and bootleg the elixir.

This, too, was the time of the great hue and cry after the bewhiskered Bolshevik. It was the day of the Palmer raids and the Red hunt which culminated in the tragic killing of Sacco and Vanzetti. Among their many other sins the Bolsheviks were also accused of creating the crime wave by spreading disrespect for private property, law and order. After taking one look at the newspaper caricatures of the Bolshevik, bomb in hand and a gleam in his eye, some citizens became convinced that the crime wave could be ended merely by sending them all "back to where they came from."

These are some of the factors that the average citizen worried about when he tried to fathom the reasons for the crime wave which he believed existed at the end of the last war. If the causes of the alleged crime wave are not clear, something else is: Talk about crime waves is often an instrument of control used by one group or social class to mobilize opinion against another group or class. Talk about a crime wave has a social function, and this has usually been a reactionary one.

TURNING to the people who are supposed to have scientifically approached the study of crime, we find that, by and large, they are pretty humble about their knowledge and make few grandiose claims. We notice, also, that they are as human as we are, and manifest much the same weaknesses as those who speculated about the crime wave after the last war. For example, each of the scholars has a tendency to find that the field in which he specializes is, somehow, always the most important in explaining crime.

The medical specialists have tended to concentrate on such factors as the health of criminals, or others of their physical characteristics. Some of them believe that criminals are physically underdeveloped, while others of their col-

A Mexican view of the "independent" press. From "1945," monthly review of the painters, printmakers, cartoonists, writers and photographers of Mexico.

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leagues deny this. These studies are, in part, prompted by the expectation that those who are poor physical specimens will compensate for their shortcomings by indulging in crime. One scholar has claimed that criminals are glandularly unbalanced, and it is this that results in their criminality. Another has even professed to find some relation between criminality and the blood type!

This looking into every closet and opening every door seems to have had the same unfortunate consequences for the criminologists as it did for Bluebeard's wives; it is fatal to their practical usefulness. While searching for all the perfectly accurate causes of crime, criminologists have often neglected to answer decisively those questions in which the citizen is interested.

The citizen would be satisfied with something less than a complete account of the "causes" of crime. If he were to be told, for example, under what conditions—especially those on which he can have some influence—crime tends to increase or decrease, he would in all probability be satisfied. A boy scout sitting before his camp fire does not understand all the chemical and physical determinants of the blaze he sees in front of him. Yet, he knows that if he adds wood the fire will get bigger, and if he throws water or dirt on it, it will go out.

The criminologist, like other scholars, has perhaps concerned himself too much about knowledge for its own sake and not enough for the sake of men who need to use it. An example of this is the current equivocation about the relation between crime and the sub-standard or slum neighborhood.

The layman in his "crude" way says that, slums, among other things, breed crime. Some of the criminologists object. No, they say, the two things merely go together, but this is no proof that crime is *caused* by slums. After all, they continue, with a show of reason, there are many individuals who live in slums but who never become criminals.

It is fortunate that such criminologists are not physicians forced, for example, to treat an infected leg. Even though a doctor may know what caused the leg to be infected, nevertheless, he frequently finds it necessary to amputate. Why should the leg be amputated? It certainly wasn't responsible for the infection! The leg and the infection, however, cannot be separated, and in order to prevent the spread of the infection an amputation is often necessary.

Much the same situation holds for slums and crime; for all practical purposes they are at this time pretty much inseparable. The question of whether slums are one of the "causes" of crime obscures the issue as the citizen must face it. All the citizen wants to know is this: if slums are eliminated, will there be more or less crime? Is there any criminologist who would answer by saying, "More crime"?

The citizen is looking for and is entitled to receive a translation of what the criminologist knows about crime into political terms and objectives. It is with this in mind that the problem of post-war crime must be approached.

CRIME is not something which has to do with the incidental and relatively unimportant features of a society, such as the absence of adequate street lighting, or even the invention of the automobile. Crime has its roots in the fundamental ways in which we live, in our characteristic modes of thinking, and in the principal problems and goals of our time.

We are now at the end of a war against the most reactionary forces in the world. More of our men have been engaged in this struggle, and for a longer period of time, than in any other since the Civil War. We have promised our soldiers the Four Freedoms, a new Economic Bill of Rights —a freer and better America with durable peace and security.

Fighting in malaria-ridden jungles, in deserts, in the rubble of once beautiful cities—and in any event, far from home—our men justifiably believe that the nation owes them something for the special sacrifices they have made. They have marched victorious under the *Arc de Triomphe* and through the history-crowded streets of Rome. The cheers of liberated nations will echo in their ears for decades to come. They have brought happiness and the opportunity for a good life to millions of others. They would hardly be human to expect less for themselves.

Unlike the period following the last war, the present one finds us a nation in which human rights, the right to a job and a decent living standard, has wide public recognition. This has been one of the most important and lasting ideological results of the New Deal decade.

We may, I believe, anticipate a real crime wave in the near future if these promises, the promises for which our men have fought and lived in ways unimaginable to the civilian, are not kept. The American soldier who has to return to the filth of a slum hovel will feel that these promises have been broken. The American soldier, or civilian for that matter, who is forced once more to stand in breadlines, or to go unemployed for months and perhaps years, will know that the promises made have been broken.

When a civilization prevents men from achieving the goals it has dangled before them, it creates the conditions that bring about crime.

A striking illustration of this is the incidence of crime among the Negro people. A slum is the nursery of criminals, whether the inhabitants of the slum are Negro or white. Since the proportion of Negroes forced to live in slum areas is larger than the proportion of whites, it is natural that the incidence of crime should be greater among Negroes. In addition, the Negro, more than any other group in America, finds the legally permitted and socially acceptable methods of attaining the goals most Americans seek closed to him. The doors to success in American society have signs over them which read: "For Whites Only." Consequently, some Negroes, like some whites who for one or another reason are not permitted through these doors, are tempted to climb in through the window.

At the same time it is also true that statistics of Negro crime are inflated. The Negro people's status in the United States is a quasi-colonial one and they are therefore subjected to "special" police and penal treatment. For example, it is perfectly legal for a white man to have sexual intercourse with a southern Negro woman. It is more than likely, however, that in a reverse situation the Negro man whose relations with a southern white woman become public knowledge will be tried for rape—if it ever comes to trial.

The Negro and white soldier, veteran and home front producer, have had the flames of the American Promise fanned by the war we have waged. If a genuine crime wave is to be prevented we must move toward the realization of this American Promise as reinterpreted and expressed in the Four Freedoms and The Economic Bill of Rights.

The political equivalent of the desire to prevent increased crime is a well planned and energetically implemented reconversion and demobilization program. It means housing, health, education and, most important, jobs for all the people. For all this the labor movement, veterans, the Negro people and all Americans who want a better life will have to wage an unceasing struggle.

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Dear Reader:

NEW MASSES is planning changes that will more fully and positively express the cultural interests of our readers. It will become a cultural-political magazine in which cultural material in the broader sense—fiction, criticism, reportage, cartoons, science, education, philosophy, poetry, etc.—will be fused with a treatment of political material that gets away from the mere reflection of headlines and digs more deeply into the major issues of our time. At the same time we shall be more than ever a militant, crusading magazine that tries to illuminate with Marxist insight the problems of today and tomorrow.

We are already rounding up the writers and artists for the new and richer NM. Some have begun appearing in our pages: writers like Howard Fast, Nathan Ausubel, Richard O. Boyer, Millen Brand, Lawrence Emery, Edwin Berry Burgum, Alban Winspear; artists like Philip Evergood, Don Freeman, Frank Kleinholz, Joseph Hirsch, Chaim Gross. There will be many more, including some of the best talents among the veterans. In addition, two or three writers of national reputation will join the editorial staff of NM.

But we cannot make these changes without the wherewithal. NEW MASSES has neither wealthy "angels" nor big commercial advertisers. And we normally have to operate at a defecit. But we have capital that none of the others have: the loyalty, devotion and self-sacrifice of our readers. It is you and thousands of others like you who for thirty-five years have made it possible for us to carry on and become an important influence in American life.

Increased printing, paper and engraving costs have already forced us to raise our subscription rate to six dollars beginning March 15. But the changes we are planning—changes that will mean a better, more exciting, more influential NEW MASSES—will cost extra money.

We know the demands that are made on you. You are supporting strikes, you are giving to many progressive causes. But can any of these causes afford to get along without NEW MASSES? Can you afford it? Can America?

Our goal for the year is $50,000—a minimum figure. We need a large slice of that within the next few weeks. In all the time I have been with NM—and I was one of its founders as a weekly—the costs of production have never been as high as today. These costs can crush the magazine unless you act.

You are the real owners of NM. We count on you. Please fill in the coupon on page 27 and send check, money order or cash.

Sincerely,

Joseph North

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READERS' FORUM

Korea Is Marching

To New Masses: Seoul certainly is the city of tremendous people's demonstrations. Today's started around eleven in the morning when in my office I could hear band music, as the demonstrators gathered. I went down to the street, and I could catch a glance of clusters of banners and red flags, moving several blocks away. Later on, long sections of the streets in the center of Seoul were lined with Korean policemen, armed with rifles, and MP's were stationed at the intersections.

I lost track of what was going on until late in the afternoon, when I learned that a parade was moving on the road that runs to the Government Building. So I went down to look. A mass of people several miles long was moving in orderly fashion away from the Government Building towards the center of the city. This was the last phase of the demonstration. As the people marched in close ranks, they carried countless banners; there seemed to be a banner for every rank. Interspersed among the banners, most of which were white, with huge black Korean script, were American, Korean, Soviet flags (and even one British). As the people marched they sang the Korean national anthem—which sounds like "Auld Lang Syne," shouted banzais at the command of their cheerleaders, and gave forth with other cheers. For every white banner the people carried, there seemed to be a red flag, since the Korean Communist Party participated in the demonstration. At intervals came bands of musicians: some with cymbals, who were dressed in colorful red, green and yellow costumes, and wore intricate hats; others equipped with Western-style instruments. Truckloads of demonstrators whizzed by the marchers, red flags flying. It seemed to be an endless mass of people and an endless confusion of banners. But everything was peaceful, so far as I know now, since the people—workers, middle class citizens in characteristic Korean robes, "white-collarish" looking men, students, women, schoolgirls, and, I assume, peasants—marched forward firmly, but in a disciplined manner. Mounted Korean policemen and mounted MP's, and truckloads of armed MP's, rode along the streets.

The purpose of this demonstration was to welcome the Soviet and American representatives now meeting in Seoul to discuss Korean problems, and presumably to begin work in the establishment of a democratic provisional government. The demonstration supported the Moscow decisions, rejected the "anti-trusteeship" position taken by Kim Koo, Rhee Syngman, et al. The demonstration itself outdid anything Kim Koo, the Democratic Party, and all the others put together could muster in a thousand years. Numerous slogans were carried this time in English and Russian—something which was not done in the other giant demonstration of January 3. I can't tell you much about the Korean or Russian slogans, but I can read English: "YES, WE WANT LIBERTY, BUT NOT IN THE FASCIST STYLE"; "LONG LIVE THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE SOVIET, AMERICAN, AND KOREAN PEOPLES"; "ANTI-TRUSTEESHIP IS UNDEMOCRATIC; STOP ANTI-TRUSTEESHIP"; "SMASH THE TERRORISTS! PROTECT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES!"; "FORM THE DEMOCRATIC UNITED FRONT," and many others. The first slogan, of which I am particularly fond, was obviously in answer to Patrick Henry's "Give us liberty or death," which Kim Koo has been employing. Another slogan was "HELP THE PEOPLE, NOT THE FASCISTS."

It is a tremendous credit to the Korean people, so long suppressed by the Japanese, to be able to do such a big organizational job as shown in this demonstration.

Efforts at the formation of a united front here seem to have broken down, but I believe there will be scrambling from the reactionary groups to get in on the united front once the Soviet-American commission goes to work. Military Government will of course give them a boost, but never fear—things look good here, and the democratic groups will come out all right. Military Government is now caught in a tight contradiction: it has been supporting, and continues to support, the groups who oppose the Big Three decision—the same groups it should be combatting—and this has come out into the open because of the maneuvers of Kim Koo and the Provisional Government to capitalize on the early unfavorable reaction to the Big Three agreement. But the people have swung behind the People's Republic, People's Party, Communist Party, and the peasant, labor, women's and youth organizations which support the Moscow agreement. It is important to have a correct perspective on the Moscow decision, because progressives must support Big Three unity, and with Big Three unity, the plan for Korea is a democratic step forward in establishing Korean independence. The primary thing of the moment is to establish a democratic provisional government—a provisional government must be established in any case—and rid the country of fascist and imperialist roots. Independence is not necessarily delayed for five years. The fight for independence goes on, but the best way to fight for independence at the moment is to support the Moscow decision. The proposal for trusteeship cannot be labeled "patriarchal," "paternalistic," or "imperialistic." It is a step forward, and helps to assure Korean independence.

Seoul, Korea. SGT. S. V.

GI's in the Philippines

The following excerpts are from letters being sent in mimeograph form from the Philippines by GI's. They came in envelopes stamped "WHY OCCUPY PHILIPPINES?" "THE SHIPS ARE STILL EMPTY," "DON'T DOUBLE CROSS THE VETERANS."

WHAT ARE AMERICAN SOLDIERS DOING IN THE PHILIPPINES?

There are a quarter million of us over here. According to the War Department's demobilization plan, only a few thousand will leave during the next few months. We agree with General Eisenhower that we must maintain strong occupation forces in Japan and Germany until fascism has been destroyed and replaced by the roots of democracy.

But *why* do we need so many troops in the Philippines now, and why should we need almost as many four months from now? We're sorry, but we can't answer that. Apparently the War Department can't either.

What do we do here? Well, the Quartermaster boys furnish food and clothing for the other fellows. The Medics take care of sick-call for the Quartermaster and other boys, and the Engineers keep up the roads for the trucks. Ordnance furnishes the trucks, and the Infantry pulls MP duty to keep the traffic going. The Signal Corps keeps up their communications. That's the way it goes—we take care of our own needs and that's about all. It seems to us that it's a pretty expensive affair, a waste of manpower and the money of American taxpayers.

The Philippines are a friendly allied country and should not require any occupation forces. We ask the War Department, we ask Congress, we ask you, *why are a quarter million troops being kept in the Philippines?*

WE DO not know all that is happening in the world today. We know just as much as our high ranking officers think it is good for us to know, and no more. Our daily newspaper, *Daily Pacifican*, has been prevented from originating any news stories whatsoever. It was ordered to carry only AP and UP dispatches, and now we have heard that it was prevented from carrying two paragraphs of a UP dispatch because they contained a criticism of a high ranking officer. Is this freedom of the press?

Our radio station, WVTM, is likewise Army-supervised. The war is over, and censorship should end with it. We are citizen soldiers and, as such, believe that we are entitled to a free press. We want facts. Is that too much to ask?

SGT. N. R.

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Jews and Arabs

TO NEW MASSES: With the news from Europe that many Jews desire to go to Palestine, I hesitate to speak critically about that country, in which I lived as an engineer from 1929 to 1937. During that time I saw many things both disturbing and encouraging. There is little doubt that the achievements of the Jews during the last thirty or forty years in Palestine contrast favorably with what has *not* been done by the Arabs. On the other hand, despite the propaganda of the Zionists to the contrary, this did not affect or improve considerably the life of the average Arab. Insofar as it did, it was only incidental. To be more specific, at the beginning of the Jewish settlement, or later in territories where new colonies were to be developed, the Jewish newcomers depended much on the labor and products of the Arabs. At that time the Arabs benefited economically from the Jews. As soon as that stage was passed, a chauvinistic attitude on the part of the Zionists agitated for a boycott of the Arabs.

There are no common Jewish-Arab labor unions except one, the Union of Railroad Workers. The Palestinian railroad is government-owned and consequently employs Arabs and Jews in a certain ratio. Naturally a union of these workers must be for all, or it can't be effective. Other unions, as for instance the Union of Building and Construction Workers, have *separate* branches for Arabs. Arab workers in or out of those separate unions get less pay than Jews. In order to "protect" Jewish labor, Zionist organizations have more than once fought against Jewish employers who used Arab laborers, not with a demand for better pay for their Arab co-workers, but with the demand (and the threat of boycott) that all Arab workers be dismissed and replaced by Jews.

Unless Jewish workers in Palestine learn to understand that it is not only in their own interest but absolutely necessary for the peace and prosperity of Palestine that Jewish and Arab labor stand together, Zionists cannot rightfully claim to be "importing progressivism."

Another factor contributing to unrest in the country is that Zionist organizations refuse to be interested in the psychological and economic consequences of land purchases by Jews. If an *Effendi* (Arab landowner) sells his land, his tenant farmers become homeless. Such people are easy prey for anti-Jewish propaganda. It would be in the interest of the Jews to help them to resettle elsewhere. The former landowner on the other hand should be invited to invest his money in joint Jewish-Arab enterprises. Thereby he would find his own interest coupled with that of the Jews, would use his influence to keep peace in the country to avoid economic disruptions and could help to get Arab customers for new industries. Neglected by the Zionists, who oppose a bi-national economy in Palestine in the interest of their goal, a Jewish State, the *Effendi* soon finds that the big money the Jews paid him for his land begins to shrink, while the income he formerly received from that land is no longer forthcoming. To be sure, that income was derived by exploiting his tenants. The net result is that many *Effendi* plot riots against the Jews in order to get "their" land back.

While the above-mentioned causes of disunity put heavy blame on Zionist policy, there are of course other factors responsible.

The overwhelming majority of Arabs in Palestine is fanatically religious and illiterate. These peoples are therefore inarticulate and consequently public opinion is easily influenced by the Moslem clergy and feudal aristocracy. The clergy and the *Effendis* are tied to each other not only through family relationships, but in their common leaning toward extreme nationalism and their animosity against anything new. New ideas and new customs would endanger their privileges as the ruling class.

But mostly responsible for unrest in the country is, unquestionably, Great Britain. The imperialists continue the ancient policy of "divide and rule." Rioting between Jews and Arabs was often encouraged by a conspicuous absence of police protection, while on the other hand when the Arabs demonstrated against Great Britain, as in 1933, order was easily restored within a few days. It is regrettable to see that the present Labor government is continuing the old practices.

The fertile land of Palestine could certainly permit a considerable increase of the population, if modern methods were used. But prosperity is only possible with peaceful collaboration of Arabs and Jews. Chauvinists on both sides should be silenced and all support should be given to those people who sincerely strive for unity. In my opinion progressives should be more careful than they have been in the recent past not to add prestige to the Zionists when they—the progressives—support the justified demands of Jews for the right to settle in Palestine.

New York. FELIX SPIELMAN.

Note for IWO and ICOR

TO NEW MASSES: Permit me to congratulate Mr. Ausubel and NM for the article, "The Jew and His Culture" [NM, Dec. 25, 1945]. I think it is an erudite, moving, and morale-provoking piece. One or two points need, I think, developing. When Mr. Ausubel speaks of Jewish culture, is that all-inclusive: Yiddish, Jewish and Hebrew? Is it not true that the poets and writers he quotes have written in Hebrew? When we speak of our Yiddish culture it seems to me we must agree that, to a large extent, it is more or less moribund. Hebrew is a language not universally spoken and taught. How then may we Jews avail ourselves of our culture? True, there are adequate schools in New York. But New York is not Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver, San Francisco and Los Angeles. It seems to me that the International Workers Order and the ICOR should particularly become interested in this problem, not only for the adults, but for—as Mr. Ausubel points out—the Jewish children.

Los Angeles. SID SCHUMANN.

Irene Bernstein

Fascist Threats

TO NEW MASSES: Here is a verbatim copy of an editorial in the Charleston, S. C. *News and Courier* on Sunday, Jan. 20, 1946.

LIBERTIES, DOLES, HONESTY

"The 'Southern group' in Congress (as every man and every 'group' in Congress should) will oppose to the last the attempt to perpetuate the Fair Employment Practices Committee, will resort to filibuster and to every possible way by which it may be defeated.

"The Senator of Georgia, Mr. George, 'served notice' that 'my party can take whatever course it will but there are men on this (Democratic) side who are free men. They will not follow the Democratic Party whip.'

"It was 'notice' that the South will leave the national Democratic Party, bolt from it, if the bill be passed. The Southern Senators should have left the national Democratic Party long ago—when it turned its back on the South. It is an anti-Southern party. Senator Maybank was exact in saying that New York 'wants to take away our liberties,' though we say that it is not the 'old New Yorkers' but the Hillmanites, and Harlemites, the 'Liberals' amalgamated with the Negroes in political control of New York, who would force racial admixture into the Southern states.

"For the information of Liberalite New York, the *News and Courier* declares now that if this FEPC bill be enacted and efforts to enforce it in the South be made, it will be resisted. If into a South Carolina cotton mill fifty qualified Negro spinners and weavers be sent to apply for employment and the company be ordered to grant it, the Northern 'Democrats' will speedily discover the meaning of Southern resistance."

Perhaps you will find use for this outright threat of fascist violence. The paper of course, was the leader in the anti-Roosevelt faction in the South and wanted Byrd as President. The strike of 1,200 workers against American Tobacco in Charleston is still quite solid—about 900 Negro, 300 white—and a main demand is for a no-discrimination clause. Meetings and everything else in common. Most of the workers are women. Interesting development, too, among local business interests—for example, there is a movement afoot amongst Chamber of Commerce bigwigs for the introduction of the secret ballot in S.C. (only state without it), and tendencies in opposition to the corrupt and inefficient and backward Bourbon rulers and their hirelings.

Brooklyn. HERBERT APTHEKER.

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UNO: FIRST ROUND

By JOHN STUART

WHEN our younger children or theirs turn back to the initial UNO sessions they will perhaps see most of them as lunatic dramas played in a madhouse. They will wonder how it was that despite all the fine, hopeful phrases of the Charter there were men who violated its spirit in the same breath that they were uttering its words. The more perceptive of our next generations will not, however, be misled by appearances. If they probe down towards the core of things they will find that the UNO in its opening days was a smaller image of the larger world. And they will come to understand the UNO as reflecting the ceaseless conflict between the sick and the dying and the healthy and the living.

And they will see, too, that while the UNO has its broader origins in the League of Nations it is not a repetition of the League. Unlike the League, the UNO is not the exclusive terrain of Anglo-French imperialism. For the first time a socialist power stands on a level of equality with the biggest states. They will see how the USSR asserted its strength and prestige in world affairs. They will see how its delegates addressed embarrassing questions to the defenders of colonial domain, how they cut the claws of the avaricious and held high the banner of freedom for the earth's downtrodden. No weak or timid state could have done that. If the first sessions of the UNO reveal anything, they reveal at once that in the person of the Soviet delegates was embodied the colossal unity of the Soviet power, its economic health and its cultural triumphs. How drastically different that is from the time Lenin was compelled to accept the bitter pill of Brest-Litovsk with its thievery of territory and people.

Mr. Bevin may have forestalled an investigation of the Foreign Office's imperialist thrusts into Greece and Indonesia. But who can doubt the real victor of the debate? Who can doubt that the Greeks or Indonesians know now that the USSR spoke in their behalf by speaking for their rights to rule themselves? Nor is it these people alone who know these things. In all of Asia, in India, wherever imperialism feeds itself, the Soviets have taken a commanding moral position. If the majority of the Security Council voted against the Soviet proposals for investigations, that is nothing new. The deaf and blind can be found in the most exalted places. They voted against Litvinov, too, when he appealed to the League for a firm collective security. He was vetoed there but he won for his country the affirmative votes of millions who were miles removed from Geneva.

It was said at San Francisco, and repeated in the newspapers, that the Russians were riding roughshod over small nations. And yet at the critical moment the USSR showed itself defending small nations from aggression and their manipulation by imperialist powers. By the same act it was the Russians who established the precedent that no area of the world can be closed off, removed from scrutiny when events there might be threatening the world's peace.

How shocking that was to Mr. Bevin, whose predecessors had always fenced in their real estate and told the world that whatever was happening in their domain, even if it meant international conflict, was none of its business! For all of Whitehall's long dealing with the Kremlin, Bevin still thought he could discuss these crucial matters privately and come to a "gentlemen's understanding."

Nor was Stettinius better than Bevin. Had the Americans refused to support the British, the British would have never attempted to organize anti-Soviet demonstrations both in the Assembly and the Council. As it was the Americans permitted the British delegates to carry the imperialist ball while they themselves sat back and posed as neutral mediators, when in fact they were supporting the British delegation to the hilt. This tactic pursued by Stettinius was one way in which Washington sought to reach the pivotal position in the UNO's affairs, to control the UNO for its own purposes.

On the Indonesian issue the Americans displayed an hypocrisy rivalled only by Bevin's claim that the presence of British troops in Indonesia was intended merely to disarm the Japanese. There is fine irony, however, in the American support of Britain's attitude. Not enough of us know that American capital has been penetrating into Indonesia and the sharpest economic conflicts exist there between London and Washington over rubber and oil. But just as the British are "protecting" the Dutch colonial domain for a price, so are the Americans shielding the British.

Nor was it an ill-considered gesture on Stettinius' part to side with Bevin against the Soviet proposal to have a commission of inquiry in Greece and Indonesia. To have agreed to that proposal would have meant that American intervention in Latin American countries might some time be subject to the same treatment. With Washington determined to close off the Western Hemisphere from the UNO through the creation of an exclusive inter-American bloc, the UNO will have no right to direct questions about hemisphere events incompatible with the maintenance of peace.

THE net effect, thus far, of Anglo-American collaboration in the UNO has been to restrict its usefulness by making it a center, albeit in a limited way, of anti-Soviet intrigue. It should by now be axiomatic that the UNO will be no better or worse than the degree of harmony among the leading powers. From watching UNO developments it becomes more and more apparent that American imperialism is investing heavily to keep the British on the alert against the USSR. That has been one objective of the American loan just as another objective is to make British imperialism subservient to American. A policy such as the Americans now fashion contains within it the seeds of war. The British, no matter how weakened they are on a world scale, will never relinquish their strongholds without the most intense struggles against their American rival as well as against the colonial emancipation forces. The independence movements now know, after the UNO debate on Indonesia, that they cannot delude themselves into expecting help from the American traders. For them it would merely be a shift in masters.

The UNO is only one arena in which the battle for peace will be waged. Its path is laden with obstacles, mostly anti-Soviet in nature, and it is these hindrances that must be constantly removed if the UNO is to make genuine contributions to the peace. All of us must see to it that the UNO is not converted into its opposite.

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NM SPOTLIGHT

Stalin's Speech

PREMIER STALIN's election speech has, not unexpectedly, caused widespread comment throughout the American press. A good deal of the reaction has naturally had that irresponsible character for which American journalism is notorious. We may skip over that in order to devote some attention to the more serious type of comment exemplified by the conservative columnist Walter Lippmann. But before doing so let us consider what Stalin actually said.

He began by reminding his constituency and the whole world of the fundamental Marxist thesis that wars do not arise accidentally, nor merely from the whims of statesmen, but rather from "the development of the world economic and political forces on the basis of monopoly capitalism." The Soviet Union played the major role in defeating the fascist powers because of the superiority of the Soviet system and the leadership of the Communist Party, which in an incredibly short span of thirteen years had transformed the nation's economy from a state of backwardness to the high level of industrialization required to supply the heroic Red Army. Now that the war is over it will be the task of the Soviet Union, by means of new Five-Year Plans, rapidly to restore its devastated areas, to expand production for mass consumption, to raise the standard of living of the people. The fifteen- or twenty-year goal will be to more than treble the pre-war level of production, for "Only under such conditions will our country be insured against any eventuality."

Now it is perfectly clear to any Marxist that the hope of preventing a new world war lies in strengthening the bastions of democracy so that the conflicts inherent in monopoly capitalism which always tend toward war may be countered by the people's action. In his speech Stalin calls for strengthening the principal bastion of democracy and peace, the Soviet Union. In London, his colleagues at the United Nations have been demanding the preservation and extension of democracy in other parts of the world. Soviet statesmen are thus giving leadership to the only policy which can possibly avert another war.

Walter Lippmann, in commenting on Stalin's speech, has grossly distorted what the Soviet Premier actually said and on the basis of this distortion comes forward with a line which is quickly becoming the ideology of reaction. Lippmann claims that Stalin has called for increased Soviet production for war, thus directly misquoting the Moscow speech. Lippmann goes on to say that the United States can be no match for the Soviet Union as a war power twenty years hence. Therefore the policy of the United States must be not only to gear its economy to the war which Lippmann regards as inevitable, but also to see to it that Western Europe and Asia are brought actively within the orbit of American war economy.

It is significant that Lippmann, who in the past has expressed a more enlightened conservative approach to American-Soviet relations, here presents a hard-boiled program of active preparation for eventual war against the Soviet Union. He of course places the onus for this on the USSR. He has in fact adopted the thesis of the whole reactionary camp.

It is monopoly capitalism that breeds war, a truth which, as Stalin points out, two world wars have amply confirmed. One cannot fight war without fighting against the monopolists and the governmental policies through which they seek to attain their ends. One cannot permanently uproot war without uprooting its source, the system of monopoly capitalism. This is why the struggle of democratic forces in this country, in Britain, in China and in Indonesia is so closely identified with the Soviet Union's task of gaining internal strength.

Deckinger.

And this is why the cardinal point of international relations must be the battle for unity between the anti-war forces in the capitalist states and the Soviet Union.

Next Battle

THE 18½-cent-an-hour increase won by the steel workers—the largest increase ever granted in that industry—is a major victory not only for labor, but for the whole American people. Thanks to the militant strikes of the steel, auto, electrical and other workers under CIO leadership, big business has been unable to repeat the union-busting pattern it established after the last war, with its assault on the living standards of the nation. At the same time all of us ought to be aware that efforts are under way, with considerable encouragement from government quarters, to nullify in part at least the increases won and those that will be achieved in the future. It is in this light that we ought to examine the government's new wage-price policy.

President Truman's recent statement on wage-price policy narrows the limits within which wages may be increased and widens the limits within which prices may be raised. It provides that, with certain exceptions, wages should not rise beyond "the general pattern" of increases already set in an industry or local area. Nationally this pattern is between fifteen and twenty percent. Previously, under the wage-price policy issued after V-J Day, the extent of wage increases was left to collective bargaining so long as they did not result in puncturing price ceilings. And under the revised policy, employers who grant increases in pay can seek higher prices on the claim of "hardship" without waiting for the end of a six months' test period as previously required.

While the wage pattern is circumscribed in a new "Little Steel" formula, the ceiling on prices is left flexible and subject to pressures for upward revision. Just what this means is evident from the grant of a five-dollar a ton boost to the Steel Trust despite the fact that its profits and accumulated reserves would enable it to absorb without difficulty the 18½-cent-an-hour increase given its workers. Efforts will undoubtedly be made to force up the cost

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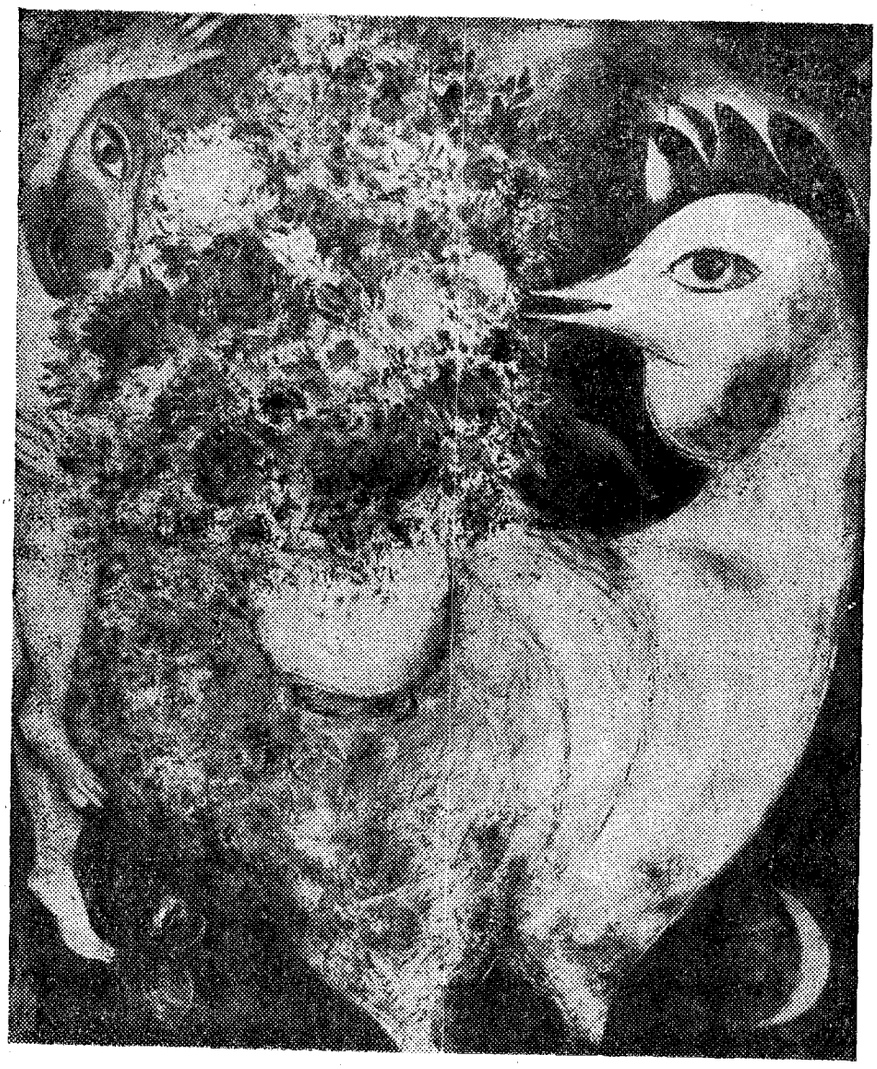

"Reveille—Matin," by Marc Chagall. At the Pierre Matisse Gallery.

of hundreds of consumers' items that use steel and other industries will attempt similar grabs. The Truman formula is thus a partial victory for the employers inasmuch as wage increases will not be taken wholly out of profits, but partly out of the people's buying power—out of wages, salaries and the income of farmers, small businessmen and professional people.

The best feature of the new measures adopted is the appointment of Chester A. Bowles as director of Economic Stabilization with amplified powers. As OPA director Bowles made a good record in holding the line against inflation. But he will be administering a policy which has been trimmed more nearly to big business specifications and he will be subject to the vast pressure of the monopolies which Truman is appeasing. Clearly the American workers' battle for decent pay must be continued. At the same time there must be organized a movement against the hijackers. The magnitude of the price rises can be limited only by the magnitude of resistance by the people.

Old Curmudgeon

With the resignation of Secretary Ickes one of the last remaining pillars of the Roosevelt administration has been toppled over. The immediate issue involved appears on the surface to be of minor import. Ickes opposed the nomination of the California oil man, Edwin W. Pauley, for Under Secretary of the Navy; he revealed to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee that Pauley had offered a bribe in the form of a $300,000 contribution to the Democratic campaign fund in return for abandonment of the government's suit to establish federal ownership of oil-rich California tidelands. In other words, Ickes was fighting a potential new Teapot Dome scandal engineered by the big businessmen who are President Truman's close pals and advisers. And when Truman publicly rebuked him, the old curmudgeon quit.

In the press conference announcing his resignation Ickes indicated that he had no difference of principle with the President and described him as trying to carry on in the FDR tradition. The Roosevelt tradition itself is by no means unalloyed, cast as it was in the mold of the most powerful imperialism in the world. Of Truman, however, it can be said that he has turned away from what was best in that tradition, and he has done so in a deeper sense than merely in the kind of appointments he has made. In Ickes' interview there are intimations that he is not entirely unaware of this and that his differences with the President extend beyond the question of Pauley and other Truman choices.

Ickes himself represents the best in the Roosevelt tradition. It was he who long before the war spoke up against coddling the Nazi and Japanese aggressors. It was he who pointed the finger at the fascist-minded men of Wall Street as the danger to American liberties. In the polluted atmosphere of Washington politics his was an aseptic influence in many fields. He now has the opportunity of making his resignation not an end but a more fruitful beginning. When he told his press conference that he had never been a member of the Democratic Party and would not necessarily vote for its next Presidential candidate, he reaffirmed a political independence which is growing in the labor movement and which, under labor's leadership, can prove decisive in the 1946 and 1948 elections.

Whom the Gods Would . . .

The classic Greek saying that "those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad" appears to have been reversed in the case of Ezra Pound, who has just been declared insane and thereby immune from trial. The weak prosecution indicates that those whom the "gods" of capitalism would *save* they first make mad. The pressures exerted to save this fascist and traitor are obviously traceable to others than the writers who have been used as the front. One does not like to gainsay scientists, but Hess' little trick on the psychiatrists indicates that their science is not always securly founded. There is too much evidence of a haste in capitalist countries to save fascists on one pretext or another to satisfy people that it is actual insanity that preserves Pound from the consequences of his crime.

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REVIEW and COMMENT

"THE NOVEL AND THE PEOPLE"

Ralph Fox's Critique Reviewed by Isidor Schneider

IN THE chapter in Ralph Fox's *The Novel and the People* entitled "Man Alive," the proposal is made that novelists turn, for a hero, to Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Communist who transformed the Reichstag Fire frameup trial into a court of judgment upon Nazism.* In him they would have a protagonist for the kind of prose epic that, for Ralph Fox, the novel should be.

In the year that he wrote this Ralph Fox himself, and scores of others in Spain—and soon after hundreds and thousands, as the epic struggle against fascism spread over the world—added themselves to Dimitrov as available protagonists. In 1937, in Spain, the major pre-1939 battleground of the European phase of that struggle, Ralph Fox died for democracy.

He was then still in his thirties. His death cut off a career of great and varied promise, a career as potential novelist, historian, political theorist and critic. To the small-visioned at that time, it seemed a wasted death, a vain martyrdom. In those days the Marxist "idealists" appeared victims of a delusion, while the practical men of the capitalist democracies and the Papacy, all accessories in greater or less degree to the murder of democracy in Spain, appeared to have made a cynical but correct estimate of the nature of man.

History has since made fools of those "practical men," but at a frightful cost —some forty millions of human lives, the ruins of scores of beautiful cities, a general impoverishment that will have lowered the world standard of living for at least a generation. But everybody now sees how tragically slow and confused was the mobilization of the forces of democracy; everybody now sees what a necessary reveille for that mobilization was the gunfire over the Spanish battlefields and the elegies over Ralph Fox and his comrade martyrs. With that late mobilization which they gave their lives to call up, came the victory that they were so sure of.

I set this down in these paragraphs because the biographical element is revealing in a consideration of this book. We can better understand Fox's vision of an active and positive new hero in fiction, better understand the dramatic urgency of the struggle awaiting this hero, better feel the involved forces and better know the confidence and affirmation in his vision, through realizing that the concept was alive in his own life, and that the confidence and affirmation came from his Marxism.

FOX'S works include a novel, *Storming Heaven;* two biographies, *Lenin* and *Genghis Khan;* a number of brilliantly reasoned political pamphlets on British imperialism, the class struggle in England and Ireland, and the political currents in France and Portugal; the critical work *The Novel and the People,* and another work of fiction unfinished at his death.

To be accurate *The Novel and the People* should also be thought of as an unfinished work. It is obviously a sketch for a fuller book. It was written on furloughs, often in places where no libraries were available. Much of the book is sweeping generalization, without supporting examples or documentation. Had Fox lived there is no question but that he would have subjected his ideas to considerable qualification and probably to basic revaluation. Yet unfinished and hasty as it is in its judgments, *The Novel and the People* is the best Marxist study in its field.

The book has the virtues of rapid and intensive composition. It is fresh, forthright, gusty. It has something brought from the battlefield into the writing. The crisp, unhesitating statements have the authority of conviction and the exhilaration of fighting ardor.

The Novel and the People also has the general virtues of the left-wing criticism of the thirties. Travelling widely over the history of the novel, it makes useful correlations of developments in literature with economic and social developments. It has interesting things to say concerning the very high responsibility of the novelist as historian, dealing with men in a living, ungeneralized way. It offers insights into the functions of the novel as epic, a function thwarted for several capitalist generations but now in sight of new opportunities in the growing consciousness and power of the working class.

Fox also quotes aptly and extensively from the writings of the Marxist masters, particularly Marx and Engels. If refutations are still needed, these quotations refute the charges that Marxist thought is mechanical and rigid. Fox makes excellent use of them.

All of these qualities, together, make his book, next to Christopher Caudwell's, who shared Fox's martyrdom in Spain, the most stimulating work of Left criticism in the thirties.

But Fox also shares the shortcomings of the thirties. His conclusions about the classics are frequently rationalizations, rather than evaluations. For example, Fox shuts his eyes to much that was undemocratic in Shakespeare which, if considered rather than evaded, would help to clarify the relations of the great poet with the thinking and literary conventions of his age. He also allows Rabelais a latitude in literary devices that he denies to contemporary writers.

Particularly contradictory is Fox's attitude toward the new insights of modern psychology. He acknowledges that "certainly the modern psychologists have added to the store of our knowledge of man and the novelist who today neglected their contribution would be as ignorant as he is foolish." But he does not follow his own advice. His comments on the "psychological" writers have the tone of an advocate in a jurisdictional dispute arguing against a rival claimant. He would have done well to have taken an example from the wise understanding with which Marx and Engels made use of the great contributions of Darwin, which similarly half-fascinated and half-horrified the culture of that period.

PERHAPS the most characteristic shortcoming is Fox's misevaluation of the writing of our own age. This derives, in large part, from a misapplication

* THE NOVEL AND THE PEOPLE, *by Ralph Fox. With an American preface by Howard Fast and a biographical preface by John Lehmann. International.* $1.75.

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of the correct judgment that capitalism has corrupted culture.

The capitalist corruption of culture is concentrated for political reasons as well as profits in the press, radio and movies. Certainly a Hearst sheet is a calculated balance of stimulants toward hatreds to political minorities and sedatives for social miseries. The very manner in which much of this "culture" is purveyed—half-a-dollar's worth of printed matter for a dime and expensive radio programs broadcast to listeners for nothing—is, in itself, corrupting. This bribery, through virtually free and deliberately low-grade entertainment, has a strong resemblance to the bribery of the stultifying arena spectacles by which the Roman ruling classes corrupted both culture and the people in their day.

The critic who wishes to make a really usable analysis of the capitalist corruption of culture must do it in this area of culture. He must study the yellow press and its techniques; he must listen critically to the soap opera; he must see the Grade B movies and figure out their hows and whys, he must grit his teeth and plow through the corn and cliches in the latest "hot" item in the corner drugstore lending library. He must not imagine that he has done all that by an offhand dismissal, while he gives his full attention to the exceptional play, the exceptional music, the exceptional book.

Much of the work of artists who wrote, composed and painted in defiance and often in explicit protests against capitalist standards and conditions was dealt with as if the frequent frenzy of the protest was the corruption. Numbers of these artists, of course, went to extremes of individualism.

In some, of course, the protest included or evolved into, anti-human tendencies whose final expression, as in the case of Pound, was fascism. But usually even the extreme individualists were reacting to the de-individualization, the dehumanization imposed by capitalism. Other artists, like Dreiser, found more direct and usable expressions of their dissent. But, in general, this cultural dissent has had a powerfully corrosive effect upon the intellectual morale of capitalism.

Fox dismisses, as corrupted, virtually all of the outstanding writing of our time. Had he lived I am sure that he would have revised this judgment. Had he lived he would probably have given attention, too, to American literature, probably the most influential of any national literature of our time. This lack Howard Fast points out in his introduction. Nevertheless, even in its incompleteness, this vigorous and wide-ranging book stands among the important critical works of our time.

Growth of a Man

PIPER TOMPKINS, *by Ben Field. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.*

On the back cover of *Piper Tompkins*, Doubleday advertises some of its "important" fiction, a list headed by du Maurier's *The King's General*, and Costain's *The Black Rose*. *Piper Tompkins* may not have a fraction of the sale of these romantic rewrites of history, but it is certainly the most important piece of fiction on Doubleday's, or any other publisher's list.

At a time when American labor is fighting its greatest battles, when the returning vet is finding that the "high wage" bilge he heard during the war is a crock of bull, Ben Field has written a novel which gives a clear, penetrating picture of factory and farm life. The worker is not glorified, nor are the factory and farm written about with the mystical, confused worship of the intellectual who has never really worked with his hands. Ben Field knows both farm and factory, and he shows them in all their drudgery and harsh, dirty work. At the same time he never lets his readers forget the importance of the worker and his skill.

The story opens before Pearl Harbor, when Piper Tompkins, a headstrong country kid—shy, lonely, a highly individualistic boy who has always settled his problems by himself—decides to come to the city and work in a factory. Piper wants independence from his equally headstrong father. His mother, a capable, gentle woman, feels factory work will keep him out of the Army.

An excellent mechanic, Piper is thrown into factory life, where his country shyness is at first the subject of the more sophisticated factory workers' jokes. Piper becomes the tool of the factory superintendent, a slick bully, who is anti-Negro, anti-Jewish, and of course, violently anti-union.

At first anti-union himself, the story traces Piper's slow understanding of the union, and of the other workers about him; his admiration for Scotty, the shop steward, and his love for Scotty's daughter. The book ends with Piper, a staunch union man, going off to the Army.

Piper Tompkins is a simple story, yet in this thin frame Field shows the workers' pride in turning out as much war material as they possibly can, their pride in the union, the introduction of Negro workers into the plant, and the solidarity of the workers of all creeds and colors, to win the war.

Field writes vividly, with a matured style, a quick ease, that makes the story run smoothly from cover to cover. He writes clear, sharp portraits of Ike, Piper's tough, blustering father; Flossie, a fleshy, over-sexed girl; Emily, whose husband is in the Army, and who must have a man; Mike Colonna, Jimmy O'Neill, Becker and the other factory workers. In Scotty, the militant old Scotch union leader, Ben Field has given us a magnificent character—a true working class leader. A hard drinking, sharp-tongued man, Scotty has tremendous energy, a serious mind, and undying loyalty to his class. Impressed by young Piper's skill as a machinist, Scotty acts as a father to the boy—teaching him his trade, and at the same time pounding into Piper's head the value of unionism and working class solidarity. Field has Scotty do all this without any artificial speeches or long-winded lectures. His character never loses the life and energy of reality.

Piper himself emerges as a matured man, with full understanding of unionism, a highly skilled worker, and a little cocky—as would any young kid turning twenty who is making nearly a hundred dollars a week. To me, the girl, Lucy, never quite came off. I'm afraid her smugness and priggish attitudes would be unbearable for any real life Piper, and certainly with Flossie, Emily, and the ever-willing Margie around, Piper can hardly be expected to spend too much time with Lucy, who has a stiff neck from holding her nose in the air.

The weaknesses of *Piper Tompkins* are essentially minor ones. In an effort to make sure a machinist would not find fault with the book, Field seems to strain himself to include technical details until, now and then, a paragraph reads like a tool catalogue.

The two Negro girls are handled a bit too casually. Their coming into the Hartford factory would cause more discussion and attention than it does in the book; and we never get as clear a picture of them as we do of Mike, Becker and the other workers.

Ben Field has not only written the first book about American workers to appear in a long time, but a good one, written with all the tenderness and beauty of a poem. *Piper Tompkins* should bring his fine talent before the wide audience it deserves.

FRED WITWER.

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"Profile of a Young Woman," by Maurice Becker.

New Poetry

THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS, *by Oscar Williams. Creative Age Press. $2.*
TRIBUTE TO THE ANGELS, *by H. D. Oxford University Press. $2.*
A WREATH FOR SAN GEMIGNANO, by Richard *Aldington. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. $2.*

"THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS" is the second volume of Oscar Williams' poems to appear since he resumed the writing of poetry in 1937. Between these two volumes and his first book of poems, *The Golden Darkness*, there is a sixteen-year gap of fallow silence, of deepening experience and careful cultivation of a personal poetic idiom.

In spite of the gap of time, *That's All That Matters* opens on a note that echoes from *The Golden Darkness*. The difference between the original note and its present echo provides a clue to the emotional and intellectual basis of Williams' present writing. Both then and now Williams is profoundly, painfully, sometimes even morbidly sensitive to natural beauty. "With Me," a poem from *The Golden Darkness*, expresses this love of nature simply, almost naively.

When I was born a million stars
Flamed out of dead eternity,
And heaved the hills into the sky
As moonlight heaves the shaggy sea.

The poem ends: "All time and space were born with me."

The opening poem of *That's All That Matters*, "The First Born," takes up the same theme some twenty years later. The concept is no longer a simple assertion of uncomplicated delight in the personal discovery of the beauty of nature: it becomes a metaphysical conceit, subtle, complex, full of dialectical contradictions. I quote only disconnected lines to illustrate the difference.

The world was born ahead of me.
O monstrous twin!
It was a head-on collision of the atom with
The planet, a birth in the face of everything dying;
Race or collision, monstrous twin or antagonist,
You are caught in the act of celebrating my coming!

Williams' metaphysically complicated responsiveness to nature emerges with a mystical religious strain to produce some of the best poems in the present collection ("Spring," "On Rising in the Morning," "Judas," "Chant," "By Fiat of Adoration," "A View"). These poems are the assertions of Williams' poetic credo: that nature is the only comforting manifestation of God, a well of beauty at which man can restore himself and beside which he can escape from the painful "present tense."

Williams may indeed have been able to "lie on a grassy mound on a sunny day of the great war, on one side, pillow under head, left eye open, right eye closed against a too bright sun," and reflect

How my sight had become translated into a landscape
I could not see, but the grandeur stirred the roots in me
Every little change the wind made (and he kept changing)
Improved things without adding to the perfection.
The crystal cricket sound was sprinkled, a celestial salt,
With the feel of the magnificent morning on the skin.
Delicately gleamed the berries, a light on which
The eye sat easily as birdfeet on a live twig
And on its own ambidextrous wings the eye flew
To shady sidings of leaves weighing their wafers of sun. . . .

But the world intrudes, for

Back in the house the fag ends of quarrels were strewn
About in the rooms, the news was rotting on the front
Doorstep, the war had entered the stage of habit.

Which would be even more distressing if there were not such a perfect way out for Williams:

. . . not six feet away I had reached the window
Of the safe country, the wall of my forehead vanished,
Rolled up like a shade, and there out in the open time
I lay transfixed, my mind all grass trees wind and sky.

The reference to the war as "news" recurs in those of Williams' poems which deal directly with the war, and always against the background of a beautiful, peaceful landscape.

Birds chirped in waterfalls of little sounds for hours,
Rainbows in miniature nuggets, were stored in the dews,

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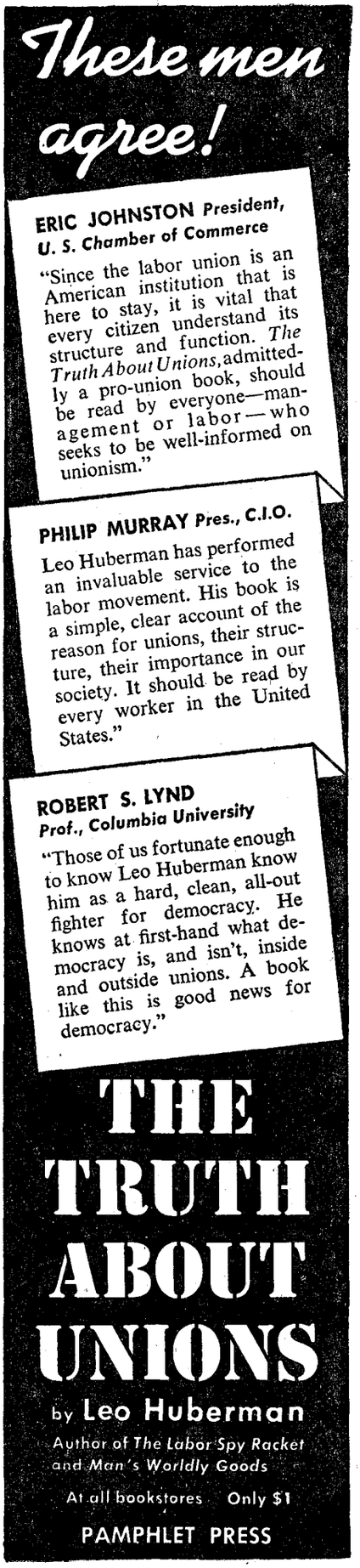
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The sky was one vast moonstone
of the tenderest blues;
And the meadows lay carpeted in
three heights of flowers:
One morning the world woke up
and there was no news.

Again, in "The Paper in the Meadow":

The news is yellowing in the rain,
The paper lies with all the words
plain,
There in the meadow the paper lies
Read by the ants and the stars
bright eyes

The news is yellowing in the rain,
Not like the leaves, not like the
grain,
Not like the flowers or things that
grow,
The news is the color of long ago.

This is a spectator view of the war and Williams knows it but he takes issue with participants:

A poet soldier has elsewhere said
They die in pain but not in vain
In vain and forever are the dead
dead
Alas death is always in vain

Perhaps there are others fitter
Than I am to speak of pain
But that world can only be better
That knows they have died in
vain.

One hardly feels the need to take issue with Williams on the question of whether the war was in vain. No matter how far our victory should fall short of the goals of the war; no matter how much must yet be done to justify the unspeakable expenditure of pain, all fields are greener and flowers fairer because the news brings word from Nuremberg.

But one cannot help taking issue with the system of values that underlies Williams' poetry. His religious feeling, which suggests Kierkegaard, is so purely personal that it is divorced from all the great human values with which religion as a human institution has concerned itself. His religion is infinitely remote from the religion of Milton which compelled him to cry out, "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones/ Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold." He is even more immeasurably remote from the fervor of Blake's declaration:

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my
hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant
land.

And paradoxically, the nature in which he seeks refuge excludes man except in the role of rapt observer. This is a system of values where there are no values; a system which can be maintained only by a prodigious effort of willfulness; a system which points in the direction of areas far more sterile than any wasteland.

H. D.'s "TRIBUTE TO THE ANGELS" is in the same vein as her last year's *The Walls Do Not Fall*. The vein is thin. The book is thin. And the talent which it displays is no more robust than that which H. D. displayed in the heyday of the Imagist movement some thirty years ago. It may be significant that H. D. has also turned mystic in a manner very tenuously suggestive of Yeats, with almost imperceptible traces of the Blake of the Prophetic Books.

RICHARD ALDINGTON'S *A Wreath for San Gemignano* is notable for the introduction which he has written to his translation of Folgore da San Gemignano's *The Garland of Months*. The translations were written to commemorate the partial destruction of San Gemignano "in that war on Italian territory which was merely one more of the criminal stupidities of this decade." His feeling for San Gemignano is touching. He is certain that "If the wreck and ruins are replaced it will not be by something new and better, but by something new and repulsive, so expressive of the blight that has fallen on the human spirit. . . ." With no regard to the issues involved and with an all-too-generous apportionment of guilt, he deplores the violence which brought about the destruction of San Gemignano. "The vandals," he says, "are always the vandals, whatever their excuses or motives." He experiences no difficulty in fitting these views to his own admission that "All that was San Gemignano was created in the teeth of an endless tempest of violence, unreason, treachery and carnage." Nor is he abashed by the fact that the very poet, Folgere, whose poems he offers in translation as a wreath was himself one of the most ardent political partisans of his time, a passionate adherent to the party of the Guelphs, the popular party which opposed the Ghibelline or Imperial party in Dante's time.

The "Garland" itself is quaint. So

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are the illustrations by Aldington's wife. The book is very handsomely printed.

DAVID SILVER.

Waltz on a Precipice

TWILIGHT ON THE DANUBE, *by F. C. Weiskopf. Knopf. $3.*

ONE of the great contributions of the European novel of the last hundred years has been its portrayal of society in the grip of historical change, so truly seen that we can pick up books by writers of wholly dissimilar mind, such as Balzoc and Proust, or Dostoyevsky and Chekov, and find characters of one entering the pages of the other. In this tradition is Weiskopf's *Twilight on the Danube*, which describes a family which, although living in Prague, might be kin to Mann's German Buddenbrooks. A wealthy merchant family, Weiskopf's Reithers hold fast to traditions that go back to the age of feudalism, regarding themselves both in antecedents and in standards of taste and culture as members of the lesser nobility. And in the face of the ruthless forces of industrial and finance capitalism that have taken control of both economy and politics, they assume a liberalism that is less a potent force in their own day than a melancholy urge to recover an imaginary past.

Where Thomas Mann in his novel covered a half century, Weiskopf concentrates his story within the year that ended with the First World War, suggesting the past by the contrast and clash of three generations living within the same mansion. And there are more important differences in point of view. Mann, writing more than three decades ago, was wholly attached to his people, lamenting their decline as the death of a world. Weiskopf, although he does not descend to mockery, has no such attachment. He reveals clearly the lack of substance in the Reither benevolent liberalism, and the reactionary nature of the Austro-Hungarian empire to which they still cling. It is a tribute to Weiskopf's standards as an artist that he has achieved so clear a criticism within an essentially sympathetic and understanding approach, and avoided the easier path of jeering at his characters, for the life of the Reithers is one that could lend itself easily to violent satire. The grandfather, Alexander Reither, in his fifties but still proud of his zest for life, collects mistresses as he does fine wines and pictures. His son and daughter live barren married lives, their unhappiness in their marital relationships reflecting

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their faint, unfruitful contact with the life about them. Wally, the granddaughter, lets her curiosity and ambition override any moral scruples, and even her cousin Adrienne, who becomes a Socialist, enters the movement with romantic notions and the desire to love and be loved.

But if the author's human and rounded portrayals are all to the good, the question remains of why he has chosen such a family as the center of his novel. Unlike the Reithers, his Czech national spirit is strong and burning. His heart is with the Prague workers, whom he portrays as struggling to organize, and to clarify their political ideas, in those days before ideas had the tempering brought by two wars and the attack of fascism. He is fully conscious of the malignancy of the powers that were pushing towards war in 1913, and of the futility of any liberalism to stop them. Short but brilliant scenes bring out the undercurrent of Czech independence, the disease of anti-Semitism, the barbarism used to break the Prague unions, the ruthlessness of the war party and their complete control of the court and army, the corruption of business in its partnership with the army. But these themes are obliquely handled, as background to his story of the perishing Reither tradition. And for all the power with which he has described these people, the book leaves unexplained why they concern him so deeply, a factor neither for progress nor reaction in a world he shows embarking upon a mortal struggle between the two.

It may be that works to follow will make the author's reasons more clear, for a footnote explains that there are such works planned to cover the entire period between two wars. And it may be that the book shows the effect of the six years, between 1938 and 1944, that separated its inception and completion. For these were years not only of harried refugee life for the writer, but of such overwhelming change in world forces that no man's mind can have remained the same. I find the latter half of this book leaner in its writing, sharper in its thinking, with less of the nostalgic feeling and lingering over sensuous detail of which Mann is so much the master. But as the book stands, it is a mature novel by an exceptionally fine artist whose succinct writing makes no bid for easy popularity and shows always the presence of an informed and probing mind, a pleasure to read because novels of this quality have been few in recent years.

S. FINKELSTEIN.

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Education for Whites

PRIMER FOR WHITE FOLKS, *edited by Bucklin Moon. Doubleday Doran. $3.50.*

BUCKLIN MOON, author of *The Darker Brother*, one of the best of the new crop of novels dealing with black-white relations, began his *Primer for White Folks* with the conviction that the proud "Caucasian" and not the American citizen of African descent is the one in need of instruction and uplift. His collection, he says, ". . . is an attempt to present a general picture of the Negro—his backgrounds, his relationship with whites, his everyday denial of first-class citizenship, and what he really wants in American life." This is a large order, but Mr. Moon is a man of sound literary judgment and—more important—a keen awareness of social responsibilities. Therefore, he has to a large degree succeeded in his ambitious undertaking.

It is inevitable that short stories and sketches, as well as the articles not too heavily freighted with statistics and "facts," should make easier reading and evoke a more ready emotional response. The short stories for the most part persuasively and unobtrusively pose various interracial problems. Sara Haardt's "Little White Girl" touchingly dramatizes the intrusion of Southern mores between a white child and her Negro playmate. Dorothy Parker wittily dissects certain "friends" of the Negro in her "Arrangement in Black and White." "White on Black," by the late Tess Slesinger, records the surrender of a brilliant colored boy to the inexorable forces conditioning his position among his schoolmates. An especially appealing item is Kenneth W. Porter's "The Flying Africans," vivifying the newly-captured slaves' overpowering longing to return to freedom in their native land.

Some of the factual pieces, particularly those dealing with current affairs, may prove to be heavy plowing for the "average American" at whom Mr. Moon admittedly has aimed. Likely enough, the "expert in race relations," whose attention the editor has not courted, will relish these specifically informative sections more than the others. Dr. W. E. B. DuBois' "African Culture" is an excellent opening gun, for the veteran sociologist and historian knows how to make his material palatable. As usual, it is easy for almost anybody to note omissions, but it would be hard to quarrel with the compiler over the pertinence of most of his selections. However, the *New Yorker*ish and somewhat over-labored cleverness of St. Clair McKelway's "The Touchin' Case of Mr. and Mrs. Massa" contributes a rather incongruously flippant note.

JACK CONROY.

Worth Noting

AMONG the recently announced Stalin prize-winners in literature are Konstantin Simonov, author of *Days and Nights*, which has appeared in this country and is a current best seller. Other prize-winners whose work has appeared in this country are Wanda Wasilewska and Benjamin Kaverin. Two awards went for historical fiction: Vyacheslav Shishkov's book on the peasant rebel leader, *Pugachev*, and Alexander Stepanov's tale of the Russo-Japanese war, *Port Arthur*. Two non-Russian Soviet writers received awards, the Uzbek poet Gafur Gulyam and the Byelo-Russian poet Arkady Kuleshov. Poets appear to have received the majority of the awards, for the prize-winners include the poets Alexander Tvardovsky, Alexei Surkov, Pavel Antokolsky, Leonid Pervomaisky, Alexander Prokofieff and Michael Lozinsky, the last of whom was honored for his translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, a work begun before the war and carried on during the war. The noted children's writer Samuel Marshak, some of whose works have appeared in America, was also a prizewinner.

THE Museum of Modern Art is currently showing "Creative Art by American Children." At the close of the exhibition on March 3 the museum, in cooperation with the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, will send it to Soviet Russia as a return courtesy for a similar exhibition of work by Russian children which was shown at the museum in the fall of 1944.

The object of this exhibition is to show how American children reflect their environment in their creative work. In order to give the Russian children a better idea of American children and their environment, photographs of some of the children who did the art work appear with photographs of the localities and themes represented.

"SOLDIER FOR FREEDOM," by Frank Volney, a poetic drama which has received the praise of Earl Robinson, is available in mimeograph form for theater, radio, dance and pageant groups. Published by Great Concord Publishers, Box 1001, Grand Central Annex, N. Y.

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MUSIC

THE "Salute to Humanity" concert which the magazine *The Protestant* sponsored at Carnegie Hall on February 10 was tangible evidence not only of a deep concern for racial and religious equality, but also of a real interest in good music. In presenting Dean Dixon and the American Youth Orchestra in modern works by composers of various nationalities, *The Protestant* was, at the same time, bringing forward an extraordinary new organization, composed of young musicians of many creeds and races, who both in performance and association exemplify the best in our modern cultural traditions. The program was one to tax the resources of even more experienced groups, and included a number of first performances, such as Sam Morgenstern's *The Warsaw Ghetto*, Tikhon Khrennikov's suite, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Ulysses Kay's *Danse Calinda*, as well as Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, with Vivian Rivkin as soloist.

Let me say at once that the American Youth Orchestra proved that it has come of age, and can be counted on to take its place among our major orchestral organizations, if given half a chance. Under Dean Dixon it has achieved remarkable precision and accuracy and richness of tone, especially in the strings, which, added to the freshness and democratic cooperation of its personnel, are sure to make an impression. And to judge from the large audience at this concert, there is room for it in our otherwise dull musical life.

Sam Morgenstern's symphonic poem, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, is set to a poem by Harry Granick, and was spoken on this occasion by Martin Wolfson. It is not to Mr. Morgenstern's discredit that his setting did not rise to the sublimity of the theme he chose. He also tended to subordinate the musical expression to the rather heavy text. Throughout I had the impression that I was listening to a sound-track of a movie, or to the incidental music of some radio drama, something not intended to impinge upon the consciousness directly. I think Morgenstern's literal adherence to the text was responsible for giving us a realistic transliteration rather than a self-sufficient piece of music.

Khrennikov's *Much Ado About Nothing* is engaging, slight and pretty, and is sure to find a place in our popular repertories, especially the drunkards'

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Week of May 30th

The week of May 30th will draw citizens from the 48 States to observe the 10th Anniversary of the National Negro Congress.

Therefore it has been decided to postpone the Art Exhibit originally planned for March 3rd through March 10th.

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song, which Kenneth Spencer sang, as he did the other songs of the suite, with remarkable beauty of voice. Kay's *Danse Calinda* was richly orchestrated, but sounded overfamiliarly like other Latin American music I have heard. In the Rachmaninoff Concerto, Vivian Rivkin, one of our most intelligent and talented musicians, performed brilliantly, but, like Kenneth Spencer, she had on occasion to struggle against overwhelming orchestral volume—a fault which the orchestra is sure to correct.

Barring this weakness, and a tendency to metronomic exactness, the orchestra was a delight. Now, won't someone else see to it that the American Youth Orchestra gets around—to other parts of the city and the country? It's more than a new orchestra—it's a new idea.

WHAT to hear in New York: New York City Symphony, City Center, Monday evenings. . . . Eugene Istomin, pianist, Carnegie Hall, February 27. FREDERIC EWEN.

Blues in Town Hall

THE music I liked best in "Exit Singing," the Town Hall jazz concert of February 9, was that contributed by George Brunis and Joe Sullivan, two men who share the same feelings about jazz although approaching it from opposite directions. For Brunis plays to perfection the great folk music of jazz, the lusty blues and rags, because it is his childhood music, and he is at home in no other. Sullivan came to this music out of a conservatory background, with an intellectual appreciation of its qualities and possibilities, and plays it like an affectionate scholar. With both a music worthy of Town Hall was being produced. And in a performance of "Stomping at the Savoy" Cozy Cole embarked upon a series of drum courses that built up an amazing structure of variations in timbre and complexities of cross rhythms, without ever descending to an orgy of sheer sound.

The rest of the concert, in spite of the promises of the announcement about "anti-commercialism," sounded to me like the better class of night spot hokum. But as always at these Town Hall affairs, the mutual pleasure and stimulation that Negro and white artists showed in collaborating on the same stage was a lesson in democracy that radio stations, record companies and band agencies can well learn from. In fact, so can the Metropolitan Opera.

WALTER SIDNEY.

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AFTER

Because of the rising costs in printing, paper, engraving, and general overhead, NEW MASSES has been reluctantly forced to raise its subscription rates from five to six dollars a year. We delayed making this decision until the last possible moment, but facts are stubborn things and we have had to bow before them.

This change in rate will go into effect March 15th.

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